NATION

Over 6.71 lakh hit by floods in Assam

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BUSINESS

Sensex, Nifty settle flat after hitting lifetime high levels in early trade

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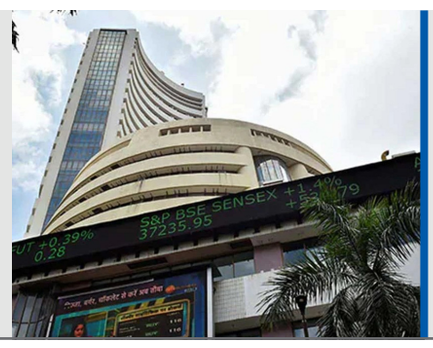

SPORTS

Portugal survives shootout scare after Ronaldo misses penalty

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116 innocents killed in UP 'satsang' stampede

Kingpin of tragedy is on the run; attendees claim that incident took place when people rushed to touch his feet

HATHRAS, 2 JULY

A stampede at a religious congregation here killed 116 people on Tuesday as devotees suffocated to their deaths and bodies piled atop each other in the worst such tragedy in recent years.

The stampede took place as people headed home after a 'satsang' by Narayan Hari alias 'Bhole Baba' in the district's Phulrai village, conducted by a preacher known as Bhole Baba. Twenty-seven bodies were brought to a hospital in neighbouring Etah district. Senior Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar Singh said 23 of them were women. And 89 lay dead in Hathras itself.

Victims, dead or unconscious, were brought to the Sikandara Rao Trauma Centre in trucks and 'tempos'. The bodies lay scattered outside the health centre as people milled around them.

Locals claimed that there was only one doctor available at Hathras trauma centre with no oxygen cylinder is there .

Narayan Hari alias Bhole Baba

One video clip showed a woman crying, sitting amid five or six bodies in a truck. Another showed a man and a woman lifeless in another vehicle.

District Magistrate Ashish Kumar said the sub-divisional magistrate had granted permission.

Eyewitness Shakuntala Devi told PTI Videos that the stampede took place while people were leaving the venue after the 'satsang', which was a day-long affair. People fell atop each other, she said, and then the bodies were pulled out.

According to Sikandra Rao sub divisional magistrate Ravendra Kumar, the stampede took place when devotees tried to get a glimpse of Bhole Baba as the event ended. They also wanted to collect some soil from around the baba's feet, he told PTI.

Satsang participant Sonu Kumar blamed the slippery ground for the stampede.

"When Guru ji left the place after almost one and half hours, all of a sudden devotees ran behind him to touch his feet," he said. When they turned back, some slipped.

Another eyewitness, who left the place before the 'satsang' ended said the arrangements were not adequate, given the number of devotees. An FIR will be registered against the organisers of the event, a state government statement said. Meanwhile, the preacher Bhole Baba and the organisers were absconding and the district police have launched a search for them The Prime Minister's Office announced an ex-gratia compensation of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each person killed in the stampede. *—PTI*

Victims were brought to Hathras' Sikandara Rao Trauma Centre in trucks and tempos **PHOTO: PTI**

MAJOR STAMPEDES IN INDIA

25 Jan, 2005: 340 were trampled to death in Maharashtra's Mandhardevi temple after people fell down on the steps made slippery by breaking of coconuts.

30 Sept, 2008: 250 killed in stampede after bomb threat triggered stamped in Chamunda Devi temple, Rajasthan

3 Aug, 2008: 162 dead in a stampede triggered by rumours of rockslides in Himachal's Naina Devi temple.

13 Oct, 2013: 115 killed during Navratri festivities in MP after rumours of collapsing bridge caused stampede.

14 Jan, 2011: 104 Sabarimala devotees were killed when a jeep crashed into pilgrims in Kerala's Idukki.

Who is Bhole Baba?

Narayan Hari alias 'Bhole Baba', who held the satsang, reportedly served in UP police intelligence department for 17 yrs. He quit his job to become a preacher. He claims to get insights from the Almighty. Baba's satsang in Covid pandemic sparked row as it was attended by 50,000 people during lockdown.

Channapatna gets ₹167 cr for irrigation

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

The State government has released a grant of Rs 167 crore to the Channapatna Irrigation Department in Ramanagara district. Speaking to reporters, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Tuesday, "The Chief Minister has agreed to release a special grant of Rs 100 crore for the taluk and Rs 70 crore has been allocated for elephant barricades and a railway bridge." He also announced that a new 100-acre layout will be formed in Kanakapura. "About 2,500 people have submitted pleas for sites and 1,121 people have requested homes in Channapatna," he said. *—Salar News*

6 gamblers drown in Vijaypura trying to escape cops

VIJAYAPURA, 2 JULY

Six feared drowned when they tried to evade police raid near Krishna River near Baluti J in Kolhar taluk of Vijayapura on Tuesday. The deceased are Mahiboob Valikara, 30; Tayyab Chaudhary, 42; Rafiq alias Bande, 55; Pundaleeka Mallappa Yankanchi, 36; and Dasaratha Gowda Sulibavi, 66; all residents of Kolhar town. Another man's identity is yet to be ascertained. The police who received a tip-off about gambling reached the spot. The men boarded the coracle in order to escape them. The coracle washed away due to heavy winds resulting in the drowning of all six. Police suspect that none of them could swim. *—Salar News*

5 Naxals gunned down by security in Chhattisgarh

NARAYANPUR, 2 JULY

Five Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Tuesday, police said. The gunfight took place in a forest under Kohkameta police station area in Abujhmad, a hilly forest area when a joint team of personnel from different security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a senior police official said. The operation was launched on Sunday. *—PTI*

Manipur haunts Modi in LS; PM mocks 'balak buddhi' RaGa

PM Narendra Modi replies to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Chants of "Tanashahi nahin chalegi (We won't allow dictatorship)", "Manipur, Manipur", and "Justice for Manipur" cracked the monsoon session on Tuesday. When the Prime Minister Narendra Modi started speaking, for the first time in the house the MPs stepped up with slogans.

Modi told Lok Sabha that the government is working on a war footing to curb incidents of paper leaks, while asserting that those playing with the future of youngsters will not be spared. The Prime Minister's comments came amid a raging row over alleged irregularities, including paper leaks, in competitive examinations such as NEET and NET.

Modi said arrests are being made across the country in connection with the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) issue.

Modi singled out Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, saying the House witnessed the wailing of a person with "balak buddhi (childish behaviour)" who tried to gain sympathy without disclosing the wrongs he had committed.

> **Today the country is telling Rahul Gandhi, Tumse Na Ho Payega**
>
> **Insulting Hindu samaaj is Opposition's habbit**
>
> **Cong was behaving as if it had won 99 out 100 seats and not out of 543** -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Modi advised all NDA MPs to not behave the way Congress leader Gandhi. He told Speaker Om Birla that the House and the country expect him to take stringent action to stop this practice of lies.

Modi said the people have given his government a mandate for stability and continuity for the third consecutive term after seeing its work of 10 years and accused Congress of trying to build a narrative that it has defeated BJP-led NDA in Lok Sabha polls.

He accused Congress of spreading brazen lies on the Agnipath scheme to discourage youngsters from joining forces. .

—PTI with agencies

Rahul fumes as LS Speaker expunges speech

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla over portions of his speech in the House having been expunged, saying that removing his considered remarks from records goes against the very tenets of parliamentary democracy and that they should be restored.

In his letter to Birla, Gandhi also cited BJP MP Anurag Thakur's speech, saying that it was full of allegations but surprisingly only one word was expunged from it. He said "this selective expunction defies logic".

In his first speech as the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, accusing the leaders of the ruling party of dividing people on communal lines. In his letter to Birla, Gandhi said while the Chair derives powers to expunge certain remarks from the proceedings of the House but the stipulation is only those kinds of words, the nature of which have been specified in Rule 380 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. He asserted that it is every member's right to raise people's concerns on the floor of the House. Lok Sabha passed a resolution condemning Opposition's disruptions during Modi's address, with Minister Rajnath Singh saying these actions "shredded" parliamentary norms. *—PTI*

'INACTION OVER ADANI'

Hindenburg trashes Sebi over show cause notice

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

India's markets regulator SEBI has slapped Hindenburg Research with a show cause notice for alleged "unfair trade practices" in its 2023 broadside against Adani Group.

The US firm termed it 'nonsense' and an attempt to 'silence and intimidate' those exposing corruption.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in the 26 June show cause notice charged Hindenburg of "distorting certain facts" in the January 2023 report on the Adani group as well as working with a New York hedge fund to make its bet.

Hindenburg, which published the notice on its website, said it made just USD 4.1 million from its declared positions on Adani stocks and criticised the regulator for not focusing its investigation into the January 2023 report "providing evidence" of the conglomerate creating "a vast network of offshore shell entities" and moving billions of dollars into and out of Adani public and private entities.

It said while SEBI was seeking to claim jurisdiction over a US-based investor, the regulator's notice "conspicuously failed to name the party that has an actual tie to India: Kotak Bank," which created and oversaw the offshore fund structure used by Hindenburg's investor partner to bet against Adani. The regulator "masked the "Kotak" name with the acronym "KMIL"," it added.

KMIL refers to Kotak Mahindra Investments Ltd, the asset management company.

SEBI has given Hindenburg 21 days to respond **PHOTO: PTI**

- Billionaire banker Uday Kotak founded bank as well as brokerage created and oversaw an offshore fund used by an unnamed investor to profit from a plunge in Adani shares that followed a damning Hindenburg said.

While KMIL stated that Hindenburg was "never" its client, SEBI's show cause notice said that Hindenburg's client Kingdon Capital Management had invested in KMIL's K-India Opportunities Fund, which created positions in Adani Enterprises Ltd prior to the report release and "a total profit of Rs 183.24 crore thereafter.

Hindenburg had shared its report with Kingdon Capital prior to the release, that led to a rout in Adani group stock, wiping out over USD 150 billion in market value of the 10 listed entities at their lowest point. Adani has repeatedly denied all allegations of wrong doing and most of its stocks have recouped losses since. SEBI has given Hindenburg 21 days to respond to its allegations.

SEBI alleged a relationship between Hindenburg and Kingdon began in the autumn of 2022. "After 1.5 years of investigation, SEBI identified zero factual inaccuracies with our Adani research.

Instead, the regulator took issue with things like our use of the word 'scandal' when describing multiple prior instances of Adani promoters being charged with fraud by Indian regulators, and our quoting of an individual that alleged SEBI is corrupt and works 'hand in glove' with conglomerates like Adani to help it skirt regulations," it said. *—PTI*

NEET-PG in Aug, papers to be made 2 hours prior

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Post Graduate (NEET-PG) 2024 is likely to be held mid-August, sources said on Tuesday. The question paper will be prepared two hours earlier

The revised date for the medical entrance exam is expected to be announced this week.

The government had then said it would "undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of processes of NEET-PG, conducted by the National Board of Examinations for medical students". A meeting was held in the Union home ministry on Monday, in which officials from the health ministry, National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences, along with its technical partner Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and Cyber Cell officials discussed the preparedness for the NEET-PG, which is to be held online. Scheduled for 23 June 23 the NEET-PG exam was postponed hours before its start amid a row over alleged irregularities, including leaked papers, for the UG exam. The scrapping of the exam - for which lakhs of aspiring medical professionals had enrolled - triggered furious protests, particularly from those who had travelled many kilometres to sit for the exam *—PTI*

HC ON RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

'Conversion will turn majority to minority'

PRAYAGRAJ, 2 JULY

The Allahabad High Court has observed that religious congregations where conversions take place should be stopped immediately, or the country's majority population will become a minority one day.

Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal made the observation while rejecting the bail application of one Kailash, who is accused of being involved in the religious conversion of several people from a village here. The court said that Kailash had been taking people to attend religious congregations where they were being converted to Christianity.

Allahabad HC **PHOTO: PTI**

"It has come to the notice of this court in several cases that unlawful activity of converting SC/ST people and other castes, including economically poor persons, to Christianity is being done at rampant pace throughout Uttar Pradesh.

"The word 'propagation' means to promote, but it does not mean to convert any person from his religion to another religion. There are serious allegations against the applicant by the informant that her brother, along with several others, were taken from their village to attend a gathering in New Delhi and converted to Christianity. The brother of the informant never returned," the court said. "This court, prima facie, finds that the applicant is not entitled to bail. Hence, the bail application of the applicant involved in the aforesaid case crime is hereby, rejected," it said.

A case under Section 365 (abduction) of Indian Penal Code and Section 3/5(1) of Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act was lodged against Kailash at Maudaha police station in Hamirpur district in 2023.

According to the FIR, one Ramphal, brother of the informant Ramkali Prajapati was allegedly taken to Delhi by Kailash to attend a social gathering. Several others from the village were also taken to such gatherings where all of them were converted to Christianity. *—PTI*

2 youths from K'taka drown in M'rashtra; 1 body retrieved

KOHLAPUR, 2 JULY

A body of one of two youth from Nipani town who drowned in the Dudhganga river basin at Kalammawadi dam in Maharashtra's Kolhapur has been retrieved. The drowning incident took place on Monday morning. According to officials, the deceased was Paratik Patil. The two youths were part of a group of friends who were visiting Radhanagari Tehsil in Kolhapur district for monsoon tourism at the dam, the official said. Meanwhile, in Pune, one of two children, who had gone missing since a family of five drowned in a waterfall close to Bhushi Dam in Pune's Lonavala, was found dead, a senior district official said on Monday. Three people whose bodies were recovered on Sunday were Shahista Ansari, 36, Amima Ansari,13, and Umera Ansari, 8. One child is still missing. The incident occurred behind the Bhushi Dam under a waterfall in Lonavala on 30 June. *—ANI*

Bull sold at record ₹18,00,000 in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA, 2 JULY

A bull was sold for Rs 18.1 lakh in Vijayapura, setting a record in cattle sales on Tuesday. The bull known as Hindusthan HP, was sold by Raman Gowda Patil, and Sadashiva from Belagavi purchased the bull. Hindusthan HP is renowned for its cart-pulling prowess and has garnered numerous accolades in Terabandi competitions across North Karnataka. The bull's impressive record includes winning 40 grams of gold, two silver medals, and four motorcycles. Standing five and a half feet tall, Hindusthan HP was pampered with a diet of milk, grains, and other nutritious food by its previous owner. The bull's sale for such a high amount has created a buzz in Vijayapura with locals discussing the significant transaction and the bull's remarkable achievements. *—Salar News*

CCB arrests 2 international drug peddlers

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

City Crime Branch (CCB) arrested two international drug peddlers and seized Rs 12 lakh worth of MDMA crystals, ecstasy pills, and cocaine, on Tuesday. CCB Narcotics Wing successfully apprehended the two peddlers, one of whom already has two cases against him in Pulikeshi Nagar and Vidyaranyapura police stations from 2022 and 2023. The other accused has a case in Rajanakunte, where CCB officials faced resistance and were attacked with stones during a previous arrest attempt. Additionally, Konanakunte police arrested an individual found in possession of 2 kg of drugs and 10 kg of poppy straw, seizing items worth Rs 2 lakh. Meanwhile, VV Puram police arrested another individual and seized 2 kg of drugs. *—Salar News*

Undertrial prisoners attacked in M'luru prison

MANGALURU, 2 JULY

Two undertrials lodged in Mangaluru jail were attacked by some inmates in the facility on Monday. According to police, Topi Naufal and his gang attacked Ullala resident Muhammad Sameer, 33, and Boliyar resident Muhammad Mansoor, 30. The attack occurred between 6.30 pm and 6.45 pm, as captured by CCTV cameras. Both the accused and the victims have a history of involvement in assault cases, often using sharp objects. Both Sameer and Mansoor are now out of danger and receiving treatment at Wenlock Hospital. *—PTI*

CM's wife 'illegally' allotted alternative land, says BJP

CM says his wife was entitled to a land under '50:50 ratio' scheme

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Opposition BJP in Karnataka on Tuesday alleged that Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) has "illegally" allotted an alternative land in a posh area to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi against the 'acquisition' of close to four acres owned by her.

The Chief Minister rejected the charge saying his wife was entitled to an alternative land under the "50:50 ratio" scheme, introduced by the previous BJP government, after MUDA formed a layout on her land without even acquiring it. Under the scheme, a land loser gets a quarter acre of developed land against the acquisition of one acre of undeveloped land.

Siddaramaiah, who hails from Mysuru, also claimed that an alternative land was given to his wife during the previous BJP government and not during his tenure as the Chief Minister.

In a post on 'X', Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka sought to know how Siddaramaiah will justify the "illegal transfer of land". He also alleged that when the matter came to light, the officers concerned were transferred, instead of suspending them.

Ashoka said that Central Bureau of Investigation or a retired high court judge should have probed the matter but the government assigned two IAS officers to investigate it "only to cover up the scam". "Who gave permission for allotment of land under a 50:50 ratio? Who recommended allotment of land in posh areas? Who gave permission for the exchange of land in the posh area without cabinet approval?" the BJP leader sought to know. Siddaramaiah said his brother-in-law Mallikarjuna had purchased three acres and 36 guntas in 1996 and gifted it to his sister, who is Siddaramaiah's wife (one acre is 40 guntas). "MUDA did not acquire three acres and 36 guntas but created plots and sold them out. It is not that my wife's property was acquired but plots were made and sold out," the Chief Minister said.

He said after plots were made on his wife's land and sold out by MUDA, she was deprived of her property. "Should we lose our property? Shouldn't MUDA give us our land legally? When we asked MUDA about it, they said they would give us land as per a 50:50 ratio. We agreed to it. Then MUDA gave us equal measurements of sites in different places" Siddaramaiah asked. *—PTI*

R Ashoka and Siddaramaiah **PHOTO: PTI**

- Siddaramaiah claimed that an alternative land was given to his wife during the previous BJP government

Panel formed to probe 'scam'

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

A report in a vernacular daily about an alleged large-scale scam pertaining to allotment of alternative sites (plots) by MUDA. Karnataka government ordered an inquiry by a panel headed by Commissioner of Urban Authorities Venkatachalapathy R. The members in the panel are Additional Director, Town and Country Planning Shashi Kumar MC, Joint Director Town, Country Planning Commissionerate, Shanthala, and Deputy Director, Town and Country Planning, Prakash. The panel has been asked to submit its report within 15 days, official sources said. MUDA Commissioner transferred Minister for Urban Development Byrathi Suresh has issued orders for the immediate transfer of MUDA Commissioner GT Dinesh Kumar, Secretary and Assistant Executive Engineer amid allegations of a multi-crore scam. The officers were transferred to ensure an impartial investigation and it does not imply they are guilty, the minister said. All site distributions have been halted and the government has annulled the illegally allotted MUDA plots. *—PTI/Salar News*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with ministers KN Rajanna and others during the KMF event in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

KMF produces 1 cr litres of milk a day; achieves milestone

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said Karnataka Milk Federation, known for its 'Nandini' brand of dairy products, has achieved a milestone of procuring one crore litres of milk a day from farmers.

"The milk production in Karnataka was 90 lakh litres a day in May last year. Now, the KMF is getting one crore litres of milk a day. This is a milestone in the history of KMF," Siddaramaiah said.

He recalled that when he was the Animal Husbandry Minister many years ago, he had handed over management of dairies to milk unions.

The Chief Minister said the State now has 15 milk unions, 15 mother dairies and 16,000 societies of milk growers.

He said the quantity of milk in half and one litre milk packets of 'Nandini" has been increased by 50 ML due to the rising milk procurement, and proportionately prices were increased by Rs two recently.

"Due to the increase in milk production, we have increased the milk quantity in the packets. This has been done because we cannot say to the milk growers, who are basically farmers, that we cannot procure extra milk they are producing," Siddaramaiah explained.

He said Opposition BJP did not understand this and started making a hue and cry that the Karnataka government increased the milk price.

"The BJP leaders are spreading lies on this issue because I feel that they have no concern for farmers. The government is giving Rs 5 crore a day to the milk producers as honorarium, which is Rs 1,800 crore annually," he added. *—Salar News*

SECURITY IN PLACE

Farmers warn of protest ahead of trail blast near KRS dam

MANDYA, 2 JULY

The district administration is gearing up for another trial explosion to ascertain whether mining activity impacts the stability of Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) Dam.

This has sparked Opposition from the Raitha Sangh (farmers' body) workers, who are preparing to launch another "go-back" protest against the trial blast. The blasts will be carried out by a team of scientists and experts amid tight police security. Irrigation department officials are digging craters even before the arrival of the scientists.

However, efforts are being made to keep the process confidential, including the states from which the scientists will arrive and their place of stay.

Raitha Sangh workers have warned of protests if the test takes place **PHOTO: SALAR**

Raitha Sangh workers have warned of protests if the test takes place.

Farmers from Mysuru and Mandya are expected to intensify their movement. Talks between farmer leaders and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar have not yielded positive results, as Shivakumar seems to support the trial blast.

Former Mandya MP Sumalath Ambareesh had previously called for a ban on illegal mining around Baby Betta. She had alleged that an illegal mining lobby was behind the blasts near the KRS reservoir. *—Salar News*

BBMP teams inspect 4.4 lakh houses across eight zones over dengue threat

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has ramped up efforts to combat the rise in dengue fever cases in the City. In a five-day span, BBMP teams inspected a 4.4 lakh houses across eight zones. The inspections targeted mosquito breeding grounds, with a focus on detecting and eliminating mosquito larvae. BBMP destroyed larvae in 13,613 of the 13.09 lakh containers it tested.

Syed Sirajuddin Madini, the Chief Health Officer, emphasised the importance of both preventive measures and public awareness. He highlighted BBMP's efforts to survey homes and disseminate information about dengue fever in schools and colleges. Over 1,000 BBMP personnel are actively involved in this awareness campaign.

Zone-wise details reveal extensive coverage: Bommanahalli (87 teams, 64,000 houses), Dasarahalli (89 teams, 29,000 houses), East (259 teams, 68,000 houses), Mahadevapura (210 teams, 60,000 houses), RR Nagar (105 teams, 48,000 houses), South (339 teams, 90,000 houses), West (280 teams, 67,000 houses), and Yelahanka (104 teams, 19,000 houses). Madini explained that the surge in reported cases is partly due to increased testing. BBMP data indicates 1,902 dengue fever cases in Bengaluru as of Tuesday. *—Salar News*

The inspections targeted mosquito breeding grounds, with a focus on detecting and eliminating mosquito larvae **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

City Police Commissioner Dayanand B taking a look at duplicate cloths seized by CCB, in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Man selling counterfeit clothes worth ₹1.38 cr held

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

City Crime Branch (CCB) arrested a man for operating a counterfeit clothing shop and seized items worth Rs 1.38 crore, on Tuesday.

The accused identified as Narasimha Raju, 38, was running the business in Rajarajeshwari Nagar and was selling fake branded clothes, including Nike, Puma, Tommy Hilfiger, Adidas, Zara, and Under Armour, at original prices.

City Commissioner B Dayananda said that, 'The Rajarajeshwari Nagar police have registered a case under the Counterfeit Goods Act. Upon receiving a tip-off, CCB raided the counterfeit clothing showroom and arrested the accused.'

—Salar News

Whitetopping to begin in 2nd week

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) will begin whitetopping around 150km of roads in Bengaluru City in the second week of July. Divided into 15 packages, 13 contractors have been finalised for the project, BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath said. The remaining two packages are awaiting government approval, but preparations for a groundbreaking ceremony (Bhumi Puja) are underway for all packages. Utility ducts (underground ducts that carry all public utility cables like water, electricity, telephone or gas) will be created on both sides of whitetopped pavements. This will allow for future maintenance and upgrades of utilities without damaging the road surface. Chief Engineer Prahlad said day-and-night work schedules will be applied to ensure timely completion. *—Salar News*

BJP criticises RaGa's Parl speech, seeks apology

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

State BJP has strongly condemned Rahul Gandhi's recent speech in Parliament, accusing the Leader of the Opposition of disrespecting Hindus and spreading falsehoods.

In a press conference at BJP State office, Jagannath Bhavan, BJP State President BY Vijayendra said that Gandhi's statements were filled with lies and baseless accusations, and demanded that he apologise to Hindus.

Addressing the media, Vijayendra said, "Gandhi's speech suggested that Hindus were involved in hate and communal violence. Gandhi has also fabricated stories about the Agniveer scheme, farmers, Ayodhya, and other issues."

Legislative Council member CT Ravi lashed out at Gandhi as a "puppet of the conversion mafia". He said, "Gandhi's statements may be influenced by his family's legacy, citing Jawaharlal Nehru's disavowal of the Hindu identity." Ravi questioned the ideological motivations behind significant historical events, alleging that Congress and its leaders were responsible for the partition of India in 1947, the rise of terrorism in Kashmir, and the empowerment of extremist groups like LTTE and the Khalistan movement. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

BJP TO PRESENT REPORT ON GOVT'S FAILURE ON 4 JULY

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

The State BJP will present a report on the failures of Congress government on 4 July during the party's special executive committee meeting.

BJP State General Secretary Nandish Reddy, on Tuesday, said, "We will be presenting a report on how the government is manipulating the people."

He added that BJP will appoint the new State Special Executive Committee. He claims 1,745 candidates are in the fray for executive posts.

On 5 and 6 July, BJP State President BY Vijayendra will conduct an overview meeting over the Lok Sabha constituencies that BJP lost. Committees from those constituencies, along with candidates, and current and former MLAs, will participate in it. *—Salar News*

SUN-EARTH L1 POINT

ISRO's Aditya-L1 completes 1st halo orbit

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

India's first solar mission Aditya-L1 spacecraft completed its first halo orbit around the Sun-Earth L1 point on Tuesday, ISRO said.

The space agency said its station-keeping manoeuvre on Tuesday ensured its seamless transition into the second halo orbit.

The Aditya-L1 mission, which is an Indian solar observatory at Lagrangian point L1, was launched on September 2, 2023 and was inserted in its targeted halo orbit on 6 January, 2024.

According to ISRO, Aditya-L1 spacecraft in the halo orbit takes 178 days to complete a revolution around the L1 point.

During its travel in the halo orbit, Aditya-L1 spacecraft will be subjected to various perturbing forces that will cause it to depart from the targeted orbit, the space agency said.

"Aditya-L1 underwent two station-keeping manoeuvres on February 22 and June 7, respectively, to maintain this orbit. Today's third station-keeping manoeuvre has ensured that its travel continued in the second halo orbit path around L1," ISRO said.

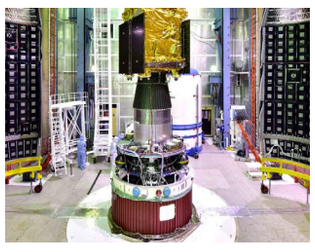


PHOTO: X/@ISRO

The agency explained that Aditya L1's journey around Sun-Earth L1 Lagrangian point involves modeling of complex dynamics.

The understanding of various perturbing forces acting on the spacecraft helped in determining the trajectory accurately and planning precise orbit manoeuvres, it added. "With today's manoeuvre, the state-of-the-art flight dynamics software developed in-house at URSC-ISRO for the Aditya-L1 missions stands fully validated," ISRO said. *—PTI*

Minister bats for making State a nanotechnology hub

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Minister of Science and Technology NS Boseraju on Tuesday said significant steps are being taken to position Karnataka as a leading state in nanotechnology research and this will be achieved through the Karnataka State Research Foundation (KSRF) and Karnataka R&D Innovation Platform (e-KRDIP).

Speaking at the "Bengaluru India Nano 2024" curtain raiser press meet here, he highlighted Bengaluru's status as one of the world's leading cities for innovation, and Karnataka's reputation as an industrially-friendly state.

The 13th edition of Bengaluru India Nano, a three-day event which is set to take place from 1 to, is being organised by the Department of Science and Technology of Government of Karnataka, Karnataka Science and Technology Promotion Society and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research. The KSRF has been established to foster a supportive environment for startups and enterprises to conduct research and manufacture new products, according to officials. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

HC denies bail to Kavitha, says she was main conspirer

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed the bail petitions moved by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in CBI and ED cases related to Excise Policy case. While dealing with Kavitha's submission that she, being a woman, be released on bail as she is entitled to the benefit of proviso of Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the court said she cannot be equated with a vulnerable woman. The high court said no case for grant of regular bail was made for now as the investigation is at a crucial stage. It rejected her plea for relief on ground of being a woman, saying as a well-educated person and a former MP, she cannot be equated with a vulnerable female and the court cannot lose sight. *—PTI*

Court asks RaGa to appear on July 26 in defamation case

SULTANPUR, 2 JULY

An MP-MLA court on Tuesday asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to appear before it on 26 July in a defamation case filed against him for alleged objectionable remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Gandhi was supposed to appear before the court on Tuesday but could not do so due to the ongoing parliament session. Gandhi is the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha. Gandhi's lawyer Kashi Prasad Shukla, who was present in the court, sought a fresh date for hearing the matter. Considering his application, Judge Shubham Verma asked Gandhi to make a personal appearance on 26 July, Shukla said. A defamation case was filed against Gandhi in 2018 over his alleged objectionable remarks against Shah. *—PTI*

Bihar govt moves SC challenging HC's order on quota hike

PATNA, 2 JULY

Bihar government has moved the Supreme Court challenging a Patna High Court verdict that has set aside the amended reservation laws in the state, which enabled the Nitish Kumar government to increase the quotas for Dalits, tribals and backward classes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent. In its 20 June verdict, the High Court declared that the amendments, passed unanimously by the state's bicameral legislature in November last year, were "ultra vires" of the Constitution, "bad in law" and "violative of the equality clause". The exercise was undertaken after the Centre expressed its inability to carry out a fresh headcount of castes other than the SCs and STs, which was last held as part of the 1931 Census. *—PTI*

M'rashtra leader Danve suspended for misbehaviour

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

The Maharashtra legislative council on Tuesday suspended Leader of Opposition and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve for five days on the grounds of using abusive language in the House. Danve was accused of using abusive language against BJP legislator Prasad Lad during a discussion on Monday evening. Lad had demanded a resolution condemning Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's`not Hindus' remarks in the Lok Sabha, which elicited a sharp reaction from the Sena (UBT) leader. The council was adjourned three times after the incident as BJP legislators remained firm on their demand that action be taken against Danve. The opposition later staged a walkout to protest the decision against Gorhe. *—PTI*

War of words in RS; BJP slams Rahul's speech

Significant portions of Congress leader Rahul's speech were expunged from the records

Jagdeep Dhankhar & Mallikarjun Kharge PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Rajya Sabha witnessed a war of words on Tuesday when Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar sarcastically said Jairam Ramesh should take the seat of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, in an effort to discipline the Congress MP.

Kharge, who is also the president of the Congress, retorted by saying the chairman was trying to bring in the "Varna" (caste) system.

The acrimony started when Dhankhar aksed Pramod Tiwari of the Congress not to state unverified facts. To this, Ramesh said it would be authenticated. "The senior leadership (Kharge) is here. I think you (Ramesh) should replace (Kharge).... You are so intelligent, so gifted, so talented, you should immediately come and take the seat in place of Kharge because, by and large, you are doing his job," the chairman said.

At this point, Kharge retorted by saying "do not bring in the Varna system...that is why you are calling Ramesh very intelligent ... and I am dull".

"Never in the history of parliamentary democracy and Rajya Sabha proceedings there has been such a disregard of the chair," he said.

Kharge added that whatever he is today is because of Sonia Gandhi and the people of the country. it. *—PTI*

Bansuri Swaraj gives notice on Rahul's speech

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

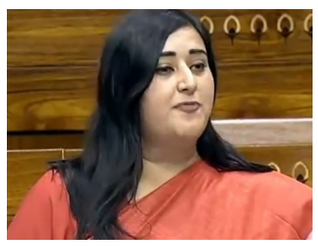
BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj gave a notice in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, pointing out alleged inaccuracies in the speech made by Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi in the House.

Significant portions of the Congress leader's speech were expunged from the records early this morning by the Chair.

Asked by Speaker Om Birla about it, Swaraj said Gandhi made certain "inaccurate" statements in his speech on Monday, and urged the Chair to take cognisance of her notice.

After Gandhi's speech on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, Union ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw and Kiren Rijiju accused the Congress leader of making "untruthful" claims about a host of issues, including the Agnipath scheme and the compensation paid to locals in Ayodhya. *—PTI*

> **I did not trust EVMs yesterday, I don't trust them today. And even if I win all 80 seats, I will not trust EVMs**
>
> -Akhilesh Yadav, Samajwadi Party Chief



Bansuri Swaraj PHOTO: PTI

Opposition's request to debate on NEET was denied in both Houses of Parliament, alleges Rahul Gandhi PHOTO: PTI

Rahul urges PM to debate on NEET in LS

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to facilitate a debate on the NEET issue in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

He said the Opposition's request to discuss the issue related to the medical entrance exam NEET was denied in both Houses of Parliament on 28 June as well as on Monday, and added that the Lok Sabha speaker had assured the Opposition that he would discuss with the government.

"I am writing to request for a debate in Parliament on NEET," Gandhi said in his letter.

"Our aim is to engage constructively to find a way forward. At this moment, our only concern is the welfare of 24 lakh NEET aspirants across India," said.

It was, however, not allowed in either of the Houses.

While Lok Sabha was adjourned little after noon amid opposition demand for NEET debate, the Rajya Sabha also witnessed protests but had proceeded with debate on Motion of Thanks to President's address. *—PTI*

Silence on Manipur not normal: MP

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Lok Sabha member A Bimol Akoijam expressed his anguish over the absence of any reference to Manipur, a state hit by ethnic violence, in President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament.

In a fiery speech late Monday night, the first-time Congress member from Inner Manipur drew attention to the 60,000 people living in deplorable conditions in relief camps in the northeastern state for the past year.

He said every inch of Manipur was covered by central armed forces, yet 60,000 people were rendered homeless, and thousands of villages were destroyed.

"Our Modi remains silent, not even uttering a word, and the President's address failed to mention this. This silence is not normal," Akoijam said in his speech. *—PTI*

Bimol Akoijam PHOTO: PTI

STUDENTS DETAINED

Over dozen students were detained while attempting to march towards the Parliament while protesting against alleged irregularities in several competitive exams, in New Delhi, on Tuesday. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on 8 July a batch of pleas related to the NEET controversies headed by DY Chandrachud PHOTO: PTI

KEJRI TO MOVE BAIL PLEA IN GRAFT CASE SOON

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will soon move an application for regular bail in the corruption case related to the alleged excise scam, his lawyer informed Delhi High Court on Tuesday. The court, meanwhile, asked CBI to respond to his plea challenging his arrest in the case involving alleged graft.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna issued notice to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and asked it to file its reply within seven days.

Besides his arrest, Kejriwal has also challenged the trial court's 26 June and 29 June orders by which he was remanded in CBI custody for three days and judicial custody till 12 July, respectively.

Kejriwal, 55, was arrested by the CBI on 26 June from Tihar Jail, where he was in judicial custody. *—PTI*

BJP, Cong workers clash over Rahul's speech

AHMEDABAD, 2 JULY

PHOTO: ANI

Workers of BJP and Congress hurled stones at each other outside Gujarat Congress headquarters in Ahmedabad on Tuesday during a protest against "anti-Hindu" remarks made by Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha.

Several workers and leaders from both sides were detained from the spot in the Paldi area after the violent clash and stone pelting, a city police control room official said.

While BJP accused Congress workers of attacking a "peaceful protest," Opposition leaders blamed BJP cadres for initiating the violence.

Both parties claimed their workers were injured in the incident and they will lodge complaints with police.

Local TV channel visuals showed party workers from both sides thrashing each other outside Congress' Gujarat headquarters, Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan. Some individuals were seen throwing stones at each other, even as police attempted to intervene.

Following the violent clash, police entered the Congress headquarters and detained several party workers. *—PTI*

Election of Paswan as MP challenged in Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Delhi High Court on Tuesday said a challenge to the election of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan from the Hajipur Lok Sabha seat in Bihar should be mounted in the Patna High Court, as it listed for hearing an election petition on the issue on 28 August.

"How is this maintainable in this high court? The constituency is in the state of Bihar. It is better you withdraw (the plea) and go to the jurisdictional high court," Justice Vikas Mahajan told the petitioner's counsel.

In her plea, the petitioner has claimed that she was a victim of an alleged sexual assault at the "insistence" of Prince Raj and his associates, including Paswan, his cousin who did not disclose this "criminal antecedent" at the time of filing his nomination for the Lok Sabha polls.

The plea said filing a false affidavit or concealing any information in the affidavit is punishable. *—PTI*

India and Belarus hold 1st ever consular dialogue

MINSK, 2 JULY

India and Belarus held the first-ever consular dialogue in Minsk and discussions were held on various Consular issues ranging from the welfare of Indian students in Belarus to enhancing tourism between the two countries.

For the meeting held between the two nations on 28 June, the Indian delegation was led by Aman Puri, Joint Secretary (Consular, Passport and Visa Division) while the Belarusian delegation was led by Andrei Kozhan, Head of General Directorate for Consular Affairs, Belarus' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

The officials of India and Belarus also agreed to follow up on the discussions of the Dialogue and review them at the next edition of the India-Belarus Consular Dialogue which will be held in New Delhi at a mutually convenient date.

The visiting Indian delegation also met with senior officials of the Belarusian Ministry of Sports and Tourism and representatives of the Indian student community in Belarus. *—PTI*

Bengal flogging: TMC man booked for attempt to murder

KOLKATA, 2 JULY

Police have leveled serious charges, including attempt to murder, assault with intent to outrage the modesty of a woman, and causing grievous hurt, against arrested Trinamool Congress strongman Tajemul Islam in the Chopra flogging case, a senior police officer said on Tuesday.

Islam, who was remanded to police custody for five days by a local court in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur on Monday, also has 12 old criminal cases, including a murder case, pending against him.

He was arrested on Sunday after a video surfaced which showed him mercilessly caning a couple in Chopra.

Meanwhile, four BJP women legislators staged a demonstration outside the West Bengal assembly for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, protesting against the assault on a couple in North Dinajpur district and an alleged torture of a woman in Cooch Beha. BJP's Asansol MLA Agnimitra Paul and three other legislators held the protest, demanding punishment for those involved in the two incidents.

2 TMC MLAs resume dharna on assembly premises

Two newly elected Trinamool Congress MLAs resumed their dharna, demanding that they be administered oath rather than in the Raj Bhavan as per Governor CV Ananda Bose's invite. Baranagar MLA Sayantika Bandyopadhyay and Bhagabangola legislator Rayat Hossain Sarkar, who were elected in by-polls held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections, have refused to take oath in the Raj Bhavan. *—PTI*

CJI: Won't comment on new laws as it is sub-judice

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Amid a heated debate over the three new criminal laws, Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud on Tuesday refused to comment on them, saying the issues arising from these statutes were pending before the Supreme Court.

"These are issues which are sub-judice before the Supreme Court, maybe possibly the other high courts. Therefore, I should not be speaking on anything which is likely to come up before the court," the CJI said while speaking to the media after an event to mark the foundation stone-laying ceremony at Karkardooma, Shastri Park and Rohini for new trial court buildings in the capital.

CJI DY Chandrachud PHOTO: PTI

In his speech at the event, Chandrachud asserted that the courts only subserve the Constitution and are in service of no one but the litigants.

"Our courts are not merely sights of sovereign power but are also essential public service providers," he said. *—PTI*

FOR DREDGING WORKS

Adani Ports given extension in Kerala harbour

THANE, 23 JAN

Kerala Port Minister VN Vasavan on Tuesday said Adani Ports has been given an extension to complete the dredging activities in the navigation channel of nearby Muthalappozhi harbour, which has been witnessing frequent boat accidents and deaths for some years.

While giving a reply during the question hour, the minister said the government had entered into an agreement with the Adani Ports in this regard in 2018, and the contract expired on 11 June.

However, the company was given an extension to complete the work as it was delayed, he said.

When legislator Saneesh Kumar Joseph (Congress) asked whether the government would be ready to take action against the port authorities for failing to fulfil its assurance, the minister, who spoke on behalf of Fisheries Minister Cheriyan, didn't give a clear reply. *—PTI*

The govt had entered into an agreement with Adani in 2018 and the contract expired this year on 11 June PHOTO: PTI

OVER 6.71 LAKH HIT BY FLOODS IN ASSAM

IAF rescues 13 fishermen; Red alerts in Gujarat as monsoon intensifies; MP on high alert

People carry daily essentials through a flooded street in Assam on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

GUWAHATI, 2 JULY

Assam's flood situation remained critical on Tuesday with over 6.71 lakh people affected in 20 districts in the second wave of flooding this year, as the Indian Air Force (IAF) rescued 13 stranded fishermen from the severely-hit Dibrugarh district, an official said.

At least 13 major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, are flowing above the danger level at different places, with alert for heavy to very heavy rainfall in several districts, an official bulletin said.

The stranded fishermen were rescued from Hatia Ali, a 'char' (sandbar) area in Dibrugarh, at the request of Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA). "All the expenditure for airlifting the people will be borne by ASDMA," the official said. The coordinated efforts of the pilot and flight gunner ensured prompt and safe boarding of the 13 survivors, it said.

The IAF added that emergency first aid was provided by the force after the rescue.

On Sunday, the IAF had rescued 8 State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel and a revenue official from Jonai in Dhemaji district when they were stranded in another sandbar area during relief operations. An ASDMA bulletin said that 6,71,167 people were reeling under flood waters in 67 revenue circles in 20 districts.

The Brahmaputra is flowing over the red mark at Neamatighat (Jorhat), Tezpur (Sonitpur), Guwahati (Kamrup) and Dhubri (Dhubri). Altogether 8,142 people are taking shelter in 72 relief camps in different affected districts. For relief and rescue operations, NDRF teams have been deployed at Cachar, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Golaghat, Majuli and Lakhimpur. *—PTI*

Flood alert issued in Manipur

IMPHAL, 2 JULY

The Imphal West district administration has requested people staying near the river to stay alert for possible breach of river banks or embankments in the wake of rising river water levels due to heavy rainfall, an official said on Tuesday. A notification issued by the Office of District Magistrate Imphal said, "Major rivers in the district have reached warning level in Imphal area... ." *—PTI*

30 villages in Gujarat cut off as rains submerge roads

JUNAGADH, 2 JULY

Around 30 villages in Junagadh district of Gujarat were cut off as roads leading to them got submerged following heavy rains, with Vanthali in the district recording 361 mm rains in the 24-hour period ending Tuesday morning, officials said. Red alert is also issued in some districts.

Ten talukas in the Saurashtra and southern region of the state received more than 200 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period resulting in water-logging in low-lying areas, they said. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said in a statement that it has sent one team to Keshod in Junagadh district to help the people who were left stranded as a result of disconnected roads. The affected talukas in the district are Keshod, Manavadar and Vanthali, the official added. As per the data shared by the State Emergency Operations Centre, Vanthali taluka in Junagadh received 361 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period ending 6 am. *—PTI*

Heavy rain lashes several parts of Surat district in Gujarat resulting in flood like situation in many districts **PHOTO: PTI**

CLIMATE CHANGE CANNOT BE IGNORED, SAYS CJI

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Flagging recent heatwaves followed by heavy rainfall in Delhi, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud on Tuesday said climate change cannot be ignored and stressed the need to adopt a "green lifestyle" to reduce carbon emissions. The CJI was speaking at a foundation stone-laying ceremony at Karkardooma, Shastri Park and Rohini here for trial court buildings in the capital.

"This year, Delhi experienced the hottest-recorded weather. We have experienced two heatwaves followed by record-breaking rain in a single day. Our infrastructure must reflect the reality we live in- climate change can no longer be ignored.

"The story of Rama Kamati is a reminder that rough, ready and handy justice is an anathema to the rule of law and procedural guarantees, which we have all come to cherish," he said. *—PTI*

Rain triggers landslide in Mizoram; 3 feared dead

AIZAWL, 2 JULY

At least three people, including a four-year-old girl, were feared dead after a landslide struck and partially buried their tin-roofed concrete building on the outskirts of the state capital on Tuesday, a police officer said. The incident, triggered by incessant rain, occurred early in the morning while the occupants were still sleeping, he added. *—PTI*

MP issues alert for heavy rainfall in 22 dists

BHOPAL, 2 JULY

The meteorological office has issued an alert for heavy rainfall in about 22 districts in Madhya Pradesh for 3 July. The Met Office also said that the temperature recorded a decline in the state right now. The temperature in the entire state recorded around 30 to 32 degree Celsius. *—ANI*

HC asks govt to give importance to sports, not 'commercialisation mantra'

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

Bombay High Court **PHOTO: PTI**

Sports play a significant role in the development of people and nation and it is high time the government gives it equal importance than the "commercialisation and concretisation mantra", the Bombay High Court has said.

A progressive state can never be oblivious of such needs of the society, a division bench of Justices GS Kulkarni and Jitendra Jain on Monday.

It quashed the Maharashtra government's 2021 decision to relinquish 20 acre land in Navi Mumbai for a 'Government Sports Complex' and shifting it to a remote place at Mangaon in Raigad district, 115 km from the existing site.

In 2003, the land was earmarked for the sports complex. In 2016, the planning authority allotted a portion of it to a private developer for residential and commercial purposes.

The bench said the Government Sports Complex was of paramount importance to children and youth, who form a large mass of population in urban areas, and it was wholly against the public interest to deprive them of best sporting facilities.

The order was passed in a public interest litigation filed by the Indian Institute of Architects, Navi Mumbai Centre, challenging the state government's decision to shift the sports complex from Ghansoli in Navi Mumbai to Mangaon. It was a decision to promote commercial utilisation of the said land by making it available for allotment to developers whose appetite for development of lands and converting cities into "urban jungles" would remain unparalleled, the court said. *—PTI*

₹180 CR LOAN CASE

Mumbai Court issues non-bailable warrant against Vijay Mallya

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Vijay Mallya **PHOTO: PTI**

- The CBI, probing the case, has claimed the promoter of the now defunct Kingfisher Airlines caused a wrongful loss of more than Rs 180 crore to the government-run bank by "wilfully" defaulting in payments

A special court in Mumbai has issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya in a Rs 180-crore loan default case linked to Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).

The NBW was issued against Mallya on 29 June by special CBI court judge SP Naik Nimbalkar and a detailed order was made available on Monday. Citing other non-bailable warrants issued against the 68-year-old businessman after taking into account CBI submission, and his status as a "fugitive", the court noted, "this is a fit case to issue an open-ended NBW against him to secure his presence".

The CBI, probing the case, has claimed the promoter of the now defunct Kingfisher Airlines caused a wrongful loss of more than Rs 180 crore to the government-run bank by "wilfully" defaulting in payments.

The embattled liquor tycoon, who has already been declared a fugitive economic offender in a money laundering case probed by the Enforcement Directorate, currently resides in London and the Indian government is seeking his extradition.

As per a chargesheet filed in the case in the court recently by the central agency, these credit facilities were issued to the grounded private carrier by the bank under an agreement. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had in August 2010 directed the complainant bank (in the case) State Bank of India (SBI) to consider the proposal of Kingfisher Airlines Ltd (KAL) for restructuring of existing facilities by relaxing the concerned guidelines as a one-time measure for the aviation sector, the probe agency said in the document.

The probe agency further alleged that an additional wrongful loss of Rs 38.30 crores was caused on the account conversion of loans to shares. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

MUMBAI RIOTS ACCUSED ARRESTED AFTER 3 DECADES

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

A 65-year-old man allegedly involved in the 1993 Mumbai riots has been arrested here 31 years after he went absconding, police said on Tuesday.

Sayyad Nadir Shah Abbas Khan was nabbed in Sewri area by a team of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Marg police station on Monday, an official said.

He was named as an accused in a case of attempt to murder and unlawful assembly during the riots in the city that followed the demolition of the Babri masjid in December 1992.

Khan was arrested by police but never attended the court after obtaining bail, the official said.

The court then declared Khan as a wanted accused and issued a non-bailable warrant against him, the official said.

Police visited his residence in Sewri in central Mumbai many times but he remained untraceable.

The sleuths finally got a lead about his whereabouts by examining the mobile phone records of his relatives. On 29 June, officials of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Marg police station got information that Khan was going to visit his residence, following which a trap was laid and he was arrested. *—PTI*

3 children die at shelter home in Indore, 12 fall ill

INDORE, 1 JULY

Three children have died while 12 have fallen ill at a shelter home in Madhya Pradesh's Indore in the last two days, an official said on Tuesday.

Karan, 12, Akash, 7, and Shubh ,8, all inmates of Bal Ashram of Shri Yugpurush Dham in the Malharganj police station area, died on Monday and Tuesday, respectively, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP) Alok Kumar Sharma said earlier.

The official said the exact cause of these deaths will be known once the post-mortem reports arrive.

According to officials, more than 200 children, including orphans and those suffering from mental ailments, are housed in the shelter home.

Twelve children from the facility were admitted to the government-run Maharaja Yeshwantrao Hospital (MYH) with complaints of vomiting and diarrhoea, the hospital's superintendent, Dr Ashok Yadav, said.

Indore collector Ashish Singh visited MYH to enquire about the children.

"According to doctors, prima facie, it appears to be a case of food poisoning. A team, led by the additional district magistrate, comprising doctors and officials of the food department has been sent to the Bal Ashram for investigation," Singh said.

"A detailed investigation of the shelter is underway. Appropriate action will be taken if the investigation finds any negligence on the part of its directors," he said.

He said that the team from the food department collected samples of food and ration from the ashram and sent them for testing. *—PTI*

Delhi: 2 hurt after shed collapses at Hyatt Hotel

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Two people received minor injuries after a temporary shed collapsed at Hyatt Regency Hotel compound in National Capital on Monday. A case has been registered, said police. On the same day, in a separate incident, one person was injured after a Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus carrying 15 passengers overturned on Ring Road in the National Capital after hitting the divider. According to police, the road accident took place around 3.40am after the DTC bus was on its way to Rajouri Garden. Delhi Police, said legal action has been initiated. Earlier this week, the national capital received highest rainfall in 88 years. *—ANI*

Monsoon covers India 6 days ahead of schedule: IMD

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The southwest monsoon has covered the entire country six days ahead of the normal date, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday. "The southwest monsoon has further advanced into the remaining parts of Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab today. Thus, it covered the entire country on 2 July 2024, against the normal date of July 8 (six days before the normal date of covering the entire India)," the IMD said in a statement. The monsoon arrived in Kerala and the northeastern region on 30 May, two and six days earlier than usual. It progressed normally up to Maharashtra but lost momentum, extending the wait for rains in West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. *—PTI*

Accused planned to kill Salman at film shoot: Chargesheet

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

An accused involved in the alleged conspiracy to kill Bollywood actor Salman Khan had planned to attack him during a movie shoot, a police official on Tuesday said citing a chargesheet filed in the case. During an investigation into the case, it came to light that Rs 25 lakh "supari" (contract) was given by jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi to his gang members to attack the actor, he said. The gang planned to use sophisticated weapons, including AK-47, from Pakistan for the attack, the official said. The Panvel Town police in Navi Mumbai submitted the 350-page chargesheet before a magistrate court on 21 June against five arrested accused. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

New horned frog species discovered in Arunachal

SHILLONG, 2 JULY

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new frog species in Arunachal Pradesh's Tale Wildlife Sanctuary, marking a significant addition to India's herpetofaunal diversity, officials said on Tuesday. The new species is a forest-dwelling horned frog discovered by a team of ZSI scientists from Shillong, Itanagar, and Pune. Saikia, along with his colleague Bikramjit Sinha, also from ZSI Shillong, led the research. The team included KP Dinesh and A Shabnam from ZSI Pune, and Ilona Jacinta Kharkongor from ZSI Itanagar. *—PTI*

Agartala bans 3-wheeler registration

AGARTALA, 2 JULY

The Tripura government has decided to impose a ban on registration of all types of three-wheeler passenger and goods vehicles in Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) from 10 July, an official said. The move is aimed at reducing traffic congestion and promoting alternative transportation systems in the civic body areas, the official said. It clarified that all the three-wheeler passenger and goods vehicles include e-rickshaws, e-carts, e-autos, petrol autos, diesel autos, CNG autos and vehicles driven on bio-fuel (methanol & ethanol). In West Tripura district, as many as 23,474 three-wheelers and 4259 e-rickshaws were registered with the transport department and 70 of these vehicles are operating in the capital town. "We highlighted the problem of a steep increase in three-wheeler movement leading to traffic problems in Agartala," Police said. *—PTI*

Teen girl stabbed to death for not talking to man

JABALPUR, 2 JULY

A 17-year-old girl was stabbed to death by a man in public in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur city after she allegedly refused to speak to him, police said on Tuesday.

While the accused is on the run, a video of the incident that occurred in the Omti locality on Monday evening has surfaced on social media. "The victim, Tamanna, was stabbed to death by a man identified as Gufran, 20, after she allegedly refused to speak to him," City Superintendent of Police (Omti) Rajesh Kumar Rathore told PTI. The girl was rushed to a government hospital, where she was declared dead, he said. CCTV footage from the area was examined, and the accused's identity was established, he said, adding that the man was absconding. The official said a preliminary probe revealed that the girl was acquainted with the accused and had recently stopped talking to him.

A video of the incident shows passersby attempting to catch the accused as he flees the scene after the attack. *—PTI*

AFTER HIJAB BAN

Mumbai college says no to torn jeans, t-shirts

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- The Chembur Trombay Education Society's NG Acharya and DK Marathe College, in the notice issued on 27 June, also said students should wear a formal and decent dress while on campus. Students can wear a half or full shirt and trousers

A city-based college, which has been in news for imposing a ban on hijab, has now also barred students from wearing torn jeans, T-shirts, "revealing" dresses and jerseys, or a dress that reveals religion or shows "cultural disparity".

The Chembur Trombay Education Society's NG Acharya and DK Marathe College, in the notice issued on 27 June, also said students should wear a formal and decent dress while on campus. Students can wear a half or full shirt and trousers. Girls can wear any Indian or western outfit, it said.

The directive came after the Bombay High Court on 26 June refused to interfere in a decision taken by the college to impose a ban on hijab, burka and naqab on its premises, observing that such rules do not violate students' fundamental rights. "Students shall not wear any dress which reveals religion or shows cultural disparity. Nakab, hijab, burka, stole, cap, etc shall be removed by going to the common rooms on the ground floor and then only (students) can move throughout the college campus," the notice said.

Students belonging to the Muslim community from Shivaji Nagar, Govandi and Mankhurd areas are enrolled at the college, located in Chembur. The notice also states that 75 per cent attendance is compulsory. "Discipline is the key to success," it added. "Students can come to college wearing a hijab or burka, change it in the college common room and then do their work," college Principal Vidyagauri Lele said. *—PTI*

AHEAD OF MONSOON

A farmer prepares a field for cultivation during the monsoon season, in Nadia district, West Bengal *PHOTO: PTI*

'Majboori' makes gig workers brave elements

It was a perilous ride into summer that went from an unprecedented heat wave to high humidity and now the monsoon, all within days. And as many retreated indoors, it was left to gig workers to brave the elements as they delivered food and myriad essentials on their two-wheelers.

Heat, humidity, hail or heavy rain, when the weather gets tough, theirs is the band that gets going, working harder and for longer hours than earlier. It's a job that has been getting increasingly tough with extreme weather events becoming more commonplace and frequent.

Weaving in and out of lanes as they whiz through traffic, Vimlesh Kumar is amongst the thousands of gig workers in Delhi-NCR. Waiting outside a bakery in Ghaziabad for the rain to stop one day last week, the 27-year-old said he has mixed emotions on such days - worried that he might get sick, glad it will pay him more.

For the likes of Vimlesh, it is about completing long shifts, delivering food on time and managing largely on their own, because "ye kaam to majboori hai, kaisa bhi mausam ho (this job is a compulsion, will have to do it no matter the weather)".

"Generally, we get Rs 15-35 on an order. But when it rains, we can get as much as Rs 55 per order. There is also the risk of falling sick, our phone getting ruined, or much worse if I have an accident. But I have to do it. There is no other option," Vimlesh told PTI.

Vimlesh, who makes Rs 20,000-25,000 a month, has to work more than 12 hours a day, travelling anywhere between 100 to 200 kilometres on his motorcycle.

Krishna, a 34-year-old delivery partner with a logistics company, complained about no respite from the elements and unempathetic customers.

"People only want to know updates on their orders. They rarely care about the weather outside," he said.

Krishna has worked with different companies over the last 10 years, including Amazon, Zomato, Swiggy and Flipkart, and said the situation is the same everywhere.

"We have to risk our lives in this job that pays barely enough to survive in this city. Smartphones, bikes and petrol... nothing is cheap these days and we have to pay from our pockets so we can work," he added.

Before the monsoon hit the national capital last week Friday, when large parts of the Delhi and its suburbs went under water stalling everyday life, the city broke records of punishing heat during the days -- and nights. Roads emanated toxic fumes, the wind felt like a blast from a furnace, the skin burned and eyes strained to remain open.

Ashutosh Kumar, 24, said the unrelenting heat would often force him to seek shelter, not for himself but for his phone that would become "too hot" and stop responding.

For a delivery partner with a food aggregator platform, not being able to make calls, send texts and check the map is akin to losing the day's earnings.

From that to unbearable levels of humidity, where the sweat factor can be a potential health hazard, and then the the rain, it has been a blur of bad weather days of Ashutosh, Krishna, Vimlesh and their ilk.

Temperatures in Delhi remained above 40 degrees Celsius for 36 straight days from 12 May on. Of these, the city saw 16 days when the mercury reached or surpassed 45 degrees. The heat index often made it feel warmer.

Another temperature phenomenon, which measures the heat's impact on people under high humidity is wet-bulb temperature. Humans sweat to bring down their body temperature. But when the humidity is high, the sweat doesn't evaporate and the body temperature doesn't come down, creating a condition that can possibly be fatal.

The weather extremities this summer can, of course, impact any and all. But for those whose daily bread depends on their job, there aren't many options.

Companies made some efforts to relieve their delivery partners of the heat to some extent by offering them refreshment, resting areas and medical help when required.

While food aggregator Swiggy said it put up nearly "900 recharge zones in high-demand areas", Zomato set up "450 rest points across India".

A Swiggy spokesperson told PTI that these zones "offer rest areas, refreshing beverages, mobile phone charging points, and restrooms accessible to all delivery partners across the industry".

Zomato's rest points offer similar services "to support the entire gig economy and delivery partners of various companies in between deliveries".

"We are asked to pick up the order from the back door, or a window that opens into the street," he said.

Companies have also made emergency response systems a part of their respective support structure.

While Swiggy's delivery partners have access to "a free, rapid-response ambulance service with an average response time of 11 minutes" that can be summoned using the SOS button in the app, Zomato also offers a "15-min ambulance and 24x7 SOS support" in over 530 cities for all delivery partners.

Urban Company, a home service aggregator, also said that it provides "comprehensive social protection benefits through insurance programs, access to credit and various other initiatives".

"We voluntarily offer free life insurance cover worth Rs 600,000, disability cover worth Rs 600,000, accidental hospitalisation cover worth Rs 70,000, and accidental OPD treatment worth Rs 10,000, among other benefits," Bhavya Sharma, director, Communications & ESG, told PTI.

"It is not that simple," countered Mahesh Sharma, another rider with an ecommerce website who moonlights as a food delivery executive.

"The process itself is quite complex and the company I work with has an insurance system that is based on your quality and quantity of work. One week you may have all the benefits and the next none perhaps," the 43-year-old said.

The first step, Mahesh declared, is to stay healthy. And if you can't, it's better to dig into your savings than rely on insurance programmes, he added. Barely covered by the gig industry for their financial needs arising out of medical emergencies, the life of delivery executives is one full of troubles, some caused by circumstances, others by the unrelenting elements. *—PTI*

HEAT, HUMIDITY OR HAIL

Swiggy said it put up nearly "900 recharge zones in high-demand areas", Zomato set up "450 rest points across *PHOTO: PTI*

LETTERS write to us at Salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Can Left parties block Far-Right to win in France?

France is firmly in uncharted territory after President Emmanuel Macron's snap elections gamble backfired and saw the opposition far-right National Rally (RN) party surge to a dramatic win in Sunday's parliamentary first-round polls, analysts say.

Led by Marine Le Pen and her young protege, Jordan Bardella, the RN looks set to take the biggest chunk of the 577-seat lower house having come away from the first round of voting with 33 percent of the vote, nearly double the 18.9 percent share it won in the last parliamentary elections in 2022.

If its position in the polls does not shift in the crucial, second round of voting on 7 July, this election could deliver the country's first far-right prime minister since World War II.

Macron's centrist Ensemble coalition, meanwhile, trailed at a distant 20.3 percent, a devastating blow for the ruling alliance. The results are worse than the coalition's 26 percent in the 2022 elections.

The RN's success is likely to see it gain a majority of seats in the parliament on Sunday, but analysts say it could fall short of the absolute majority it needs, with polls projecting it will take some 230 seats, not quite the 289 magic number. Macron's alliance is predicted to clinch only about 70-100 seats, while the left coalition, New Popular Front (NFP) could take about 165 seats.

If they fail, analysts say President Macron could be forced to work with an opposition prime minister in a rare "cohabitation" alliance (one in which the president and prime minister are from different political parties). That could significantly diminish his powers and roll back his government's policies on a vast array of issues, including energy, the European Union and France's support for Ukraine against Russia.

How are Left and centrist parties responding?

Left and centre blocs are scrambling to realign themselves in hopes of stopping an absolute RN win in Sunday's run-off. Time pressure adds more uncertainty: candidate lists must be ready by Tuesday evening, experts say.

Coalition leaders, including Macron, have called on voters not to "give one more vote" to the RN. Importantly, they have also called for an alliance between two traditionally opposing blocs to fight their common enemy – an exclusionary tactic referred to as the "cordon sanitaire", which has been employed in several EU countries to hold extreme parties at bay and keep them out of government.

Will this strategy work?

This strategy is easier said than done, experts say, as some groups are wary of collaboration.

The coalition of left-wing parties, New Popular Front (NFP), has, for its part, reacted swiftly. Leader Jean-Luc Melenchon has promised to withdraw any candidates who placed third in the first round "under all circumstances".

That means the votes of left and centre voters will be less likely to be divided on 7 July, as only the centrist candidates will remain on the ballots in those cases – although it remains unclear if voters will go for this strategy.

Centrist parties, however, do not appear as enthusiastic and are wary of joining the left coalition led by Melenchon, who is seen by some as a polarising figure.

How is National Rally responding?

Although Bardella has previously promised not to lead a government that does not have an RN absolute majority, he struck a more conciliatory tone on Sunday. "I intend to be the prime minister of all French people, to respect the opposition and always to be mindful of the unity of the nation," he said in a statement.

The RN has toned down what experts say is incendiary rhetoric on race and immigration in recent years but is still seen as a pariah in mainstream, centrist French politics. Party leader Marine Le Pen cemented Sunday's historic win with an outright re-election to her seat as a representative of the northern Pas-de-Calais department.

Although campaigns for the second round will not officially begin until Friday, RN leaders are nonetheless rallying voters online.

Thousands of protesters, dismayed at the prospect of a far-right government, took to the streets of Paris on Sunday, clashing violently with the police – and providing ammunition for the RN, experts say.

Why is the Far right winning in France?

Like much of Europe, France has been in the grip of a rising populist wave for some time. Widespread dissatisfaction with Macron's government and a cost of living crisis have fuelled anger and dissatisfaction in the country and pushed many into the arms of parties such as Le Pen's which are promising change.

Analyst Jean Yves Camus of the Jean Jaures Foundation said Sunday's election, which recorded an unusually high turnout, was both a rejection of Macron and an embrace of a far right that stands against immigration, opposes the way the EU is run and is against sending troops and more ammunition to Ukraine. That rejection cut across people of all ages and walks of life, he said. *—Al Jazeera*

The Indian Council of Medical Research asked consumers to read information on food labels to make informed and healthy food choices *PHOTO: PTI*

Poised along Indian border, Chinese troops are there for the long haul

The bloody combat operations occurring in Ukraine and Gaza, plus the tensions heating up in the South China Sea, dominate news headlines and make it easy to forget that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) - China's armed forces - continues to strengthen its position along China's southern border with India.

In the Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community, published earlier this year, border tensions between China and India merited only a single paragraph amidst all the other conflicts, threats and tensions that currently abound in the world.

Nonetheless, the report assessed that "The shared disputed border between India and China will remain a strain on their bilateral relationship." It continued, "While the two sides have not engaged in significant cross-border clashes since 2020, they are maintaining large troop deployments, and sporadic encounters between opposing forces risk miscalculation and escalation into armed conflict."

In April this year, the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College published an in-depth report examining PLA activity along the mountainous border in Aksai Chin opposite India in 2020-21. The author, Dennis Blasko, primarily considered how the PLA rapidly moved troops into the region as violence flared between Chinese and Indian troops in Galwan Valley on 15-16 June 2020. However, Blasko, a former US defence attache in Beijing and Hong Kong, also provided a useful assessment of current and future conditions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

He assessed, "Barring negotiations with the Indian military and government to withdraw out-of-area combat troops, the PLA appears ready to maintain its deployments near the LAC in Aksai Chin and on the border at Doklam indefinitely."

He continued: "In the case of Aksai Chin, due to the challenges of transporting large mechanized units over long distances, rotations of units into and out of the region will likely occur after a prolonged tour of duty (perhaps six months to a year or more). The situation has taken the form of PLA border operations against Vietnam following the 1979 war until 1987, albeit with fewer troops and less actual combat and artillery bombardment."

He pointed out that the Chinese army's "extended border reinforcement operations serve both political and military purposes, and provide the units and staffs in the Western Theater Command with real-world operational and logistics experience that cannot be achieved through routine peacetime training".

The Western Theater Command defends nearly half of China's landmass with just a quarter of the PLA ground force's total troops *PHOTO: ANI*

Incidentally, the Western Theater Command defends nearly half of China's landmass with just a quarter of the PLA ground force's total troops. The theater command possesses two group armies, plus the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Districts, which are equipped unlike any other PLA provincial military district.

Blasko made heavy use of Google Earth satellite coverage of the Aksai China area in his research for the US Army War College, and because some imagery is not up to date, he could not provide a reliable assessment of current deployments. He said, "Although China's state media continues to report on units on the 'front line' or in 'battle positions' in the Karakoram region (without specifying Aksai Chin), it has done so without revealing the total number of troops deployed or their exact locations."

In all, he calculated the PLA has approximately 20,000 soldiers arrayed over 400km front in Aksai Chin, in a zone reaching back more than 32km from the LAC. Asked about the terrain, Blasko told ANI: "I just don't think they want to pack too many troops and vehicles into such bad terrain, because they'd just make lucrative targets if fighting actually starts - lucrative to air, missile or artillery attack.

In a prolonged conflict, this is light infantry terrain where people will be trying to gain control of ridges, hilltops and areas for long-range observation. In most areas, the new tanks and armored personnel carriers and everything else would really be constricted. This is a very, very tough place to operate, even when you have air and artillery support."

South China Sea a decade ago." Indeed, the PLA is "prepared to stay in the region for as long as it takes for the two governments to negotiate a solution." Actually, there are many similarities between China's aggressive modus operandi along the Indian border and its nefarious reef-building and territory-grabbing activities in the South China Sea.

Speaking of which, the confrontation between the China Coast Guard (CCG) and the Philippines near Second Thomas Shoal on 17 June came precipitously close to armed conflict. It was the most serious confrontation ever recorded between the two sides, as CCG personnel attempted to prevent resupply of the Philippine military garrison on the beached BRP Sierra Madre vessel there. Chinese personnel operated extremely close to the grounded ship at Second Thomas Shoal, and then proceeded to wield knives and an axe, and ram a Philippine boat in an action that resulted in a Philippine sailor losing a thumb. China claimed that the CCG exercised restraint and acted "professionally and reasonably" in this skirmish, despite extremely contrary video evidence released by Manila. China's violent actions so close to the Sierra Madre, just short of boarding it, demonstrate how it is escalating tensions and testing Manila's red lines. In fact, its seizure of another military's boat could perhaps legally be construed as an act of war.

Earlier this year, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr warned that the Philippine-US Mutual Defense Treaty could be invoked if a civilian or serviceman is killed in these fiery exchanges in the South China Sea. Beijing is presently flirting with that possibility.

The Philippine personnel under attack on 17 June were from the Naval Special Operations Command, and they could easily have fought back against the lesser-trained CCG. The Philippines thus exercised remarkable restraint, and its troops also refrained from firing warning shots. This is because Manila is wary of China baiting it into escalatory behavior. On 23 June, Marcos told personnel watching over the South China Sea that the Philippines is "not in the business to instigate wars". *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

10 Cambodian environmentalists jailed for 6 to 8 yrs

PHNOM PENH, 2 JULY

Ten members of a Cambodian environmental activist group that campaigned against destructive infrastructure projects and alleged corruption were each sentenced on Tuesday to six years in prison on charges of conspiring against the state. Three of the members of the group Mother Nature Cambodia were also convicted of insulting Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni, for which they were sentenced to an additional two years in prison, giving them a total of eight years behind bars. Only five of the defendants attended the trial and the others were convicted in absentia. They included four Cambodians whose whereabouts are unknown and Alejandro Gonzalez-Davidson, a Spanish national. *—AP*

Free Imran, his detention politically motivated: UN

ISLAMABAD, 2 JULY

A UN group has demanded the immediate release of Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, saying at least two cases slapped on him were "politically motivated" and aimed to exclude him from the country's political scene. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted its opinion on the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party founder's detention in its 99th session from March 18-27 in Geneva. The UN body said that Khan's detention and prosecution in the first Toshakhana corruption case and cipher cases were "politically motivated" to exclude him from competing in the political arena. The UN group also said that it was "without legal basis", the Dawn newspaper reported. *—AP*

64-year-old Sikh pilgrim from India dies in Pakistan

LAHORE, 2 JULY

A 64-year-old Indian national, who was part of a group of over 450 Sikhs who went to Pakistan for a religious pilgrimage, died at the Wagah-Attari border after reportedly suffering a heart attack while returning, according to a media report on Tuesday. Dev Singh Sidhu from Amritsar, Punjab, had come to Pakistan to participate in the 185th death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and perform religious rites, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. While returning to India with other Sikh pilgrims, Sidhu reportedly suffered a heart attack at the Indian immigration hall. Despite immediate medical assistance, he could not be revived, the report said. *—AP*

US signs deal to help Panama remove migrants

WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

The United States is going to pay for flights and offer other help to Panama to remove migrants under an agreement signed Monday, as the Central American country's new president has vowed to shut down the treacherous Darien Gap used by people travelling north to the United States. They spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to give details of the agreement that had not yet been made public. For those migrants who are to be removed, the US also would pay for charter flights or commercial airplane tickets for them to return to their home countries. The officials didn't specify how much money the US would contribute overall to those flights. The officials said the US would be giving assistance and expertise on how to conduct removals, But the US is not deciding whom to deport, officials said. *—AP*

Nepal Cong, CPN-UML ally to oust PM

Nepal has had 13 govts in the last 16 years, indicating the fragile nature of its polity

KATHMANDU, 2 JULY

Embattled Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has decided not to resign from the post despite an agreement reached between the country's largest parties -- Nepali Congress and CPN-UML -- to form a new coalition government.

Nepal has had 13 governments in the last 16 years, indicating the fragile nature of the Himalayan nation's political system.

In a meeting of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) office-bearers held in Baluwatar on Tuesday, Prime Minister Prachanda said he would rather face a vote of confidence in Parliament than resign from the post, the party Secretary Ganesh Shah told PTI.

Prachanda, 69, has won three votes of confidence in Parliament during his one-and-a-half-year term.

The development came after Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) inked a midnight power-sharing deal to form a new 'national consensus government' to replace the Prachanda-led coalition government.

Nepali Congress, the largest party in the House of Representatives (HoR) has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. The combined strength of the two large parties is 167, which is sufficient for a majority of 138 seats in the 275-member HoR.

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Deuba, 78 and Oli, 72, agreed to share the Prime Ministerial position on a rotation basis for the rest of the term of the Parliament.

Meanwhile, the talks between Prachanda and CPN-UML Chief Oli to save the current coalition also failed, according to Maoist sources.

Quoting Prachanda, Shah said that a conspiracy has been hatched to topple the coalition government and create instability in the country.

As per the constitutional provision, the prime minister will have 30 days to seek a vote of confidence in the House of Representatives, which would give Prachanda some time for political manoeuvring.

In the meantime, the RSP, one of the key ruling coalition partners, has decided not to participate in the new alliance between the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML.

During a secretariat meeting on Tuesday, the party also decided to withdraw from the current government, party sources said. *—AP*

'I DISSENT'

Terrible disservice: Biden slams SC over Trump's ruling

WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

US President Joe Biden has criticised the "dangerous precedent" set by Supreme Court's ruling granting former and future presidents immunity from prosecution for official. He said it gives the executive office, and possibly Donald Trump, the power "to do whatever he pleases, whenever he wants to do it."

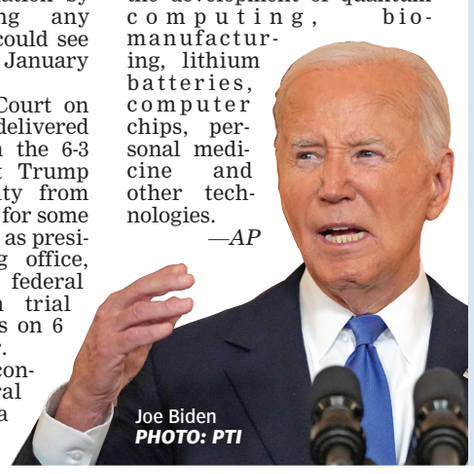
Biden said that the court had done "a terrible disservice" to the people of this nation by effectively blocking any chance that Trump could see trial related to the 6 January riot.

The US Supreme Court on Monday (local time) delivered its ruling, in which the 6-3 majority ruled that Trump may claim immunity from criminal prosecution for some of the actions he took as president before leaving office, likely delaying his federal election subversion trial related to his actions on 6 January even further.

He quoted and concurred with liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor's dissent against the ruling that the majority decision means that "the President is now a king above law with fear for our democracy" and she urged the American people should dissent too. "I dissent," Biden added.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration said it was providing USD 504 million in implementation grants for a dozen "tech hubs" in Ohio, Montana, Nevada and Florida, among other locations.

The money would support the development of quantum computing, biomanufacturing, lithium batteries, computer chips, personal medicine and other technologies. *—AP*



Joe Biden **PHOTO: PTI**

Will end war in Russia in 1 day: Trump

Donald Trump has said repeatedly he could settle the war between Russia and Ukraine in one day if he's elected president again. Russia's United Nations ambassador says he can't. When asked to respond to the claim from the presumptive Republican nominee, Vassily Nebenzia told reporters Monday that "the Ukrainian crisis cannot be solved in one day. *—PTI*

Hungarian PM meets Zelenskyy in Kyiv

BUDAPEST, 2 JULY

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was in Kyiv on Tuesday for talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, his first visit to the country since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Orbán's press chief confirmed to Hungarian news agency MTI that the prime minister had arrived in the Ukrainian capital in the morning for the talks. Bertalan Havasi said the main topic of the rare meeting will be the opportunity for building peace as Ukraine fights off Russia's invasion.

Viktor Orbán **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

This visit comes the day after Hungary took over the six-month rotating presidency of the European Union, a position that has little real power but can be used to set the tone of the bloc's agenda. Hungarian officials have indicated that they will act as "honest brokers" in the role despite worries from some EU lawmakers that Hungary's democratic track record makes it unfit to lead the bloc.

Orbán, known as Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest EU ally, has long been accused by his European partners of dismantling democratic institutions at home and acting as an obstinate spoiler of key EU policy priorities. *—AP*

At least 39 people have lost their lives and 361 have been injured in recent anti-government protests in Kenya against the new tax hike **PHOTO: PTI**

Fresh protests erupt against Kenyan govt

NAIROBI, 2 JULY

Kenya's capital Nairobi on Tuesday saw protests against the government with visuals from local media showing anti-riot police lobbing tear gas shells at people who took to the streets against the tax policies and other governance issues.

A section of professional bodies and civil society have rejected appeals by Kenyan President William Ruto's call for talks even as he said that he won't be signing into law the 2024 Finance bill that proposed tax hikes.

Visuals by Citizen TV Kenya showed police using tear gas to disperse a group of protesters near Archives in Nairobi CBD.

Ruto appealed to protesting groups saying that he knows what to do to assuage the ballooning public anger, Kenya-based newspaper Nation reported.

On Saturday, Ruto announced the formation of a National Multi-Sectoral Forum (NMSF) to address the concerns of the youth who have been the face of anti-government anger, NTV Kenya reported.

Meanwhile, at least 39 people have lost their lives and 361 have been injured in recent anti-government protests in Kenya against the new tax hike, reported Al Jazeera, citing the national rights watchdog.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) announced the toll on Monday, which is almost double the figure previously disclosed by the government for those killed while demonstrating against a raft of unpopular tax increases that have now been withdrawn. *—ANI*

N Korea brags of missiles with 'large warhead'

SEOUL, 2 JULY

North Korea said on Tuesday it had test-fired a new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying "a super-large warhead," a claim quickly disputed by South Korean officials and experts who speculate the North likely fabricated a successful test to conceal a botched launch.

It's the second time that South Korea has questioned North Korea's claim on the development of new weapons in recent days, as the rivals are locked in heightened animosities over the North's testing activities.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said that Monday's test involved the Hwasongpho-11 Da-4.5 missile, which can carry a 4.5 ton-class warhead.

It said the test was meant to verify the weapon's flight stability and hit accuracy at the maximum range of 500km and the minimum range of 90km.

The test apparently refers to the two ballistic missile launches that South Korea said North Korea performed Monday.

Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Joon said at a briefing later Tuesday that the second North Korean missile was found to have fallen on an uninhabited area near Pyongyang, the North's capital. He said he could find few previous test-launches by North Korea that have aimed at ground target sites. *—AP*

Haiti's violence has displaced 3L children: UN

SAN JUAN, 2 JULY

Gang violence in Haiti has displaced more than 3,00,000 children since March, the UN children's agency said Tuesday as the Caribbean country struggles to curb killings and kidnappings.

Children are more than half of the nearly 5,80,000 people who have become homeless in the last four months. The spike in violence began in late February after a series of coordinated attacks on key government infrastructure eventually led Prime Minister Ariel Henry to resign in April.

Gangs now control at least 80 per cent of the capital Port-au-Prince and the key roads leading in and out of it, with more than 2,500 people killed or injured across the country in the first three months of the year, according to the UN.

Children are more than half of the nearly 5,80,000 people who have become homeless in the last four months. **PHOTO: PTI**

Many children are living in makeshift shelters, including schools that are in poor hygienic conditions, placing them at risk of disease. School closures are also leading to a higher dropout rate.

The agency said children in Haiti are being forced to join violent gangs to survive as they often lack access to food, health care, clean water and sanitation. Displaced children and teenagers in Haiti also face a higher risk of sexual assault, exploitation, abuse and family separation, according to UNICEF. *—AP*

Indian gets 7.5-yr jail for defrauding Goldman Sachs

NEW YORK, 2 JULY

The former CEO and co-founder of Outcome Health — once a star of Chicago's tech scene — was sentenced to 7 ½ years in prison on Wednesday, more than a year after he was found guilty of fraud.

Before sentencing Rishi Shah, US District Judge Thomas Durkin told Shah the fraud was "not a single mistake or out-of-character impulsive moment." Government prosecutors had asked Durkin to give Shah 15 years in prison, calling him "the architect" of a $1 billion fraud. . He was involved in a Rs 8,300 crore fraud scheme that shook high-profile investors like Goldman Sachs Group Inc., Google parent Alphabet Inc., and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's venture capital firm.

"According to the trial evidence, the scheme targeting Outcome's clients began in 2011 and lasted until 2017, and resulted in at least $45 million of overbilled advertising services," the US Department said. *—Agencies*

Fishermen pull a boat damaged by Hurricane Beryl back to the dock at the Bridgetown Fisheries in Barbados **PHOTO: PTI**

1 dies as Hurricane Beryl hits Caribbean Islands

BRIDGETOWN, 2 JULY

Hurricane Beryl strengthened to Category 5 status late Monday after it ripped doors, windows and roofs off homes across the southeastern Caribbean with devastating winds and storm surge fuelled by the Atlantic's record warmth.

Beryl made landfall on the island of Carriacou in Grenada as the earliest Category 4 storm in the Atlantic, then late in the day the National Hurricane Center in Miami said its winds had increased to 260 kph. Grenada's Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell said one person had died and he could not yet say if there were other fatalities because authorities had not been able to assess the situation on the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, where there were reports of major damage. *—AP*

3RD IN MONTHS

30 hurt after flight faces severe turbulence

BRASÍLIA, 2 JULY

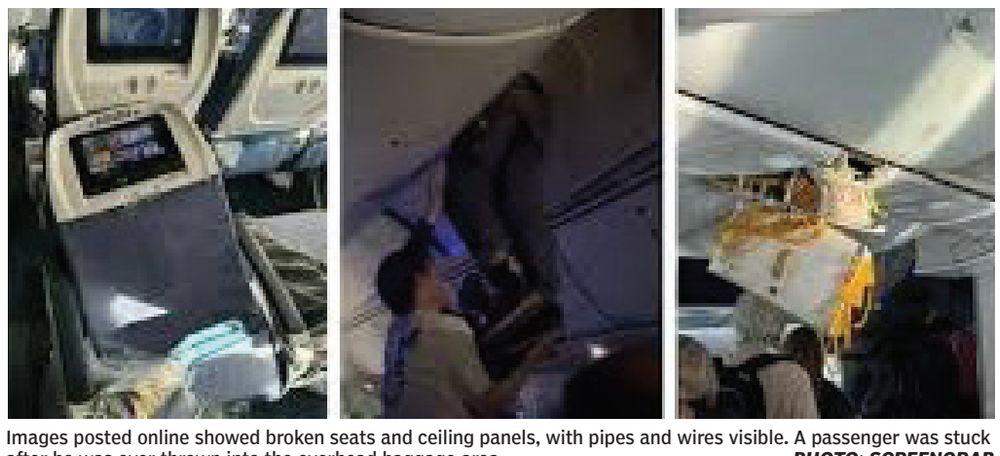
Flight hit by "strong turbulence" has made an emergency landing in Brazil, with 30 people reported injured.

The plane, a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner with 325 people on board, was diverted in the early morning hours to the airport of Natal in northeast Brazil, where more than a dozen ambulances waited. Eleven remained hospitalized at the Monsenhor Walfredo Gurgel hospital by Monday afternoon.

Among the injured were nationals of Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Israel, Bolivia and Germany.

Air Europa earlier said seven passengers had been treated for "various injuries" while an undisclosed number received medical attention for bruises.

It added a plane was being sent from Madrid to collect the passengers while the stricken Boeing is examined for damage in Natal.



Images posted online showed broken seats and ceiling panels, with pipes and wires visible. A passenger was stuck after he was over thrown into the overhead baggage area **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

X user Mariela Jodal, who said she was among the passengers, wrote on the platform that several people were injured in "very strong turbulence," but she was spared "thanks to the seat belt."

Images she posted showed broken ceiling panels, with pipes and wires visible, while one photo showed emergency vehicles with flashing lights waiting on the tarmac in Natal.

In May, a 73-year-old British man died and several other passengers and crew suffered skull, brain and spine injuries when a Singapore Airlines-operated Boeing 777 hit severe turbulence on a flight from London and was forced to make an emergency landing in Bangkok. A week later, 12 people were injured during turbulence on a Qatar Airways Boeing 787-9 flight from Doha to Ireland. *—Agencies*

Gold, silver prices decline amid weak global cues

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Gold and silver prices declined on Tuesday, tracking a bearish trend in the international markets amid uncertainty over the interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve. In the futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold for August delivery traded lower by Rs 122 or 0.17 per cent at Rs 71,532 per 10 grams. During the day, the precious metal hit a low of Rs 71,432 per 10 grams. Silver prices also eased in the spot as well as futures markets. Silver contracts for September delivery were declined by Rs 81 to Rs 89,669 per kg on the MCX. Gold traded at Rs 71,692 per 10 grams in spot markets in Mumbai on Tuesday while silver was quoted Rs 88,015 per kg. The precious metal traded almost flat at Rs 74,250 per 10 grams in local markets in the national capital. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 6 paise to close at 83.50 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

The rupee depreciated 6 paise to settle at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by a strong greenback in the overseas market and elevated global crude oil prices. Besides, a muted trend in domestic equities and foreign fund outflows dented investor sentiments, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and hit the intraday high of 83.47 and a low of 83.56 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.50 (provisional) against the dollar, 6 paise lower than its previous close. On Monday, the rupee depreciated 10 paise to settle at 83.44 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent higher at 105.99. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.76 per cent higher at USD 87.26 per barrel. *—PTI*

Godrej Properties sells 2,000 flats in Bengaluru

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Godrej Properties Ltd on Tuesday said it has sold more than 2,000 homes for over Rs 3,150 crore in its new housing project in Bengaluru amid strong demand for residential properties. In a regulatory filing, Godrej Properties said it has achieved over Rs 3,150 crore in sales bookings. This is Godrej Properties' most successful launch ever in terms of the value and volume of sales achieved, the company said. Further, Godrej Properties said it is the second launch with Rs 3,000 crore sales in the past three months. Godrej Properties has a robust launch pipeline for 2024-25, which includes several new project launches planned in Bengaluru. *—PTI*

Royal Enfield sales dip 5 per cent in June

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Motorcycle maker Royal Enfield on Tuesday said it has reported a 5 per cent decline in total sales at 73,141 units in June as against 77,109 units sold in the same month a year ago. Dometic sales were at 66,117 units last month as against 67,495 units in the year-ago period, down 2 per cent, Royal Enfield said in a statement. Exports declined 27 per cent to 7,024 units last month as compared to 9,614 units in June 2023, it added. "We remain steadfast on our long-term plans and are making considerable progress towards the same. This year will be an exciting one for Royal Enfield, as we have several new launches planned that will significantly strengthen our product portfolio," Royal Enfield CEO B Govindarajan said. This month, a highly anticipated roadster will be launched across world. *—PTI*

Sensex, Nifty settle flat after hitting lifetime high

30-share BSE Sensex declined 34.74 point to settle at 79,441.45

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

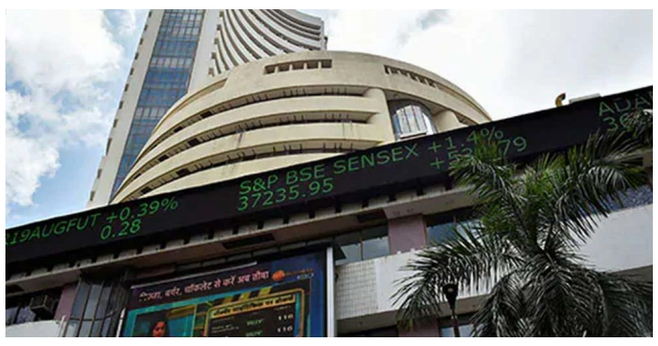
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit fresh lifetime high levels before closing flat due to profit-taking in select banking and telecom shares amid concerns over rich valuations on Tuesday.

30-share BSE Sensex declined 34.74 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 79,441.45 in a volatile trade. During the day, it jumped 379.68 points or 0.47 per cent to hit a record peak of 79,855.87.

The Nifty declined by 18.10 points or 0.07 per cent to 24,123.85. Intra-day, it climbed 94.4 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a lifetime high of 24,236.35.

Among the Sensex pack, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India and Titan were the biggest laggards.

Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.



Nifty declined by 18.10 points to settle at 24,123.85 *PHOTO: ANI*

On Monday, the BSE benchmark settled higher by 443.46 points or 0.56 per cent at an all-time peak of 79,476.19. The Nifty climbed 131.35 points or 0.55 per cent to settle at a fresh lifetime high of 24,141.95.

India's gross GST collection increased 8 per cent to Rs 1.74 lakh crore in June, sources said on Monday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.66 per cent to USD 87.17 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 426.03 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

Kotak Bank's shares fall 2%

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank on Tuesday declined over 2 per cent, wiping out Rs 7,777.33 crore from its market capitalisation as the company's name cropped up in the Adani-Hindenburg row. The stock went lower by 2.16 per cent to settle at Rs 1,769.60 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 3.98 per cent to Rs 1,736.65. *—PTI*

AFTER SEBI'S RULE

Broking firms stocks fall by 10%

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

- The regulator instructed stock exchanges, clearing corporations to ensure that any charges recovered from the end client are 'True to Label'

Shares of stock broking firms declined on Tuesday, a day after markets regulator SEBI directed stock exchanges and other market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) to implement a uniform and equal charge structure for all members rather than varying charges based on their volume or activity.

The stock of Angel One tumbled 10.50 per cent, Geojit Financial Services tanked 5.86 per cent, Dolat Algotech dropped 5.39 per cent, 5paisa Capital declined 4.51 per cent, Motilal Oswal Financial Services went lower by 3.70 per cent and SMC Global Securities dipped 2.41 per cent on the BSE.

The regulator instructed stock exchanges, clearing corporations, and depositories constituted as MIIs to ensure that any charges recovered from the end client are 'True to Label'.

It means that if a certain charge is levied on the end client by members -- stock brokers, depository participants, clearing members -- it should be ensured by MIIs that the same amount is received by them.

"To begin with, the new charge structure designed by MIIs should give due consideration to the existing per unit charges realised by MIIs, so that the end-clients are benefited from the reduction of charges," Sebi said in a circular on Monday.

The regulator has asked MIIs to comply with these additional principles while designing the processes for charges levied on their members, which are to be recovered from the end-clients. *—PTI*

SEBI mandates email for consolidated account statements

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Markets regulator SEBI on Tuesday mandated email as a default mode of dispatch of 'Consolidated Account Statement', which provides an account of securities traded by an investor, by depositories and Mutual Fund–Registrar and Transfer Agents (MF-RTAs).

The new framework will come into force from 1 April, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a circular.

A Consolidated Account Statement (CAS) is a single or combined account statement which shows the details of financial transactions made by an investor during a month across all mutual funds and also other securities held in dematerialised (demat) mode.

PHOTO: ANI

- If there is any transaction in any of the demat accounts of the investor or in any of his mutual fund folios, then CAS will be sent to that investor through email on a monthly basis

The CAS is dispatched to the investors by the depositories (NSDL or CDSL), providing the details of financial transactions in both mutual fund folios and depository accounts if PANs are common across the RTAs and the depositories.

In respect of mutual fund folios, where there is no common PAN between the RTAs and the depositories, the CAS is sent by mutual funds containing only the mutual fund transactions.

If there is any transaction in any of the demat accounts of the investor or in any of his mutual fund folios, then CAS will be sent to that investor through email on a monthly basis.

If there is no transaction in any of the mutual fund and demat accounts then CAS with holding details will be sent to the investors by email on a half yearly basis. *—PTI*

RS 6,000 PER TONNE

India hikes windfall tax on crude petroleum

This revision in special tax would be effective from 2 July *PHOTO: ANI*

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The central government has raised the windfall tax on petroleum crude to Rs 6,000 per tonne from Rs 3,250 earlier.

This revision in special tax would be effective from 2 July, according to an official gazette notification issued on Monday.

The government had around a fortnight ago reduced the windfall tax on petroleum crude to Rs 3,250 from Rs 5,200.

International crude oil is currently trading at nearly a two-month high. Brent crude traded near USD 87 a barrel after rising Monday, while West Texas Intermediate was above USD 83, due to continued geopolitical crisis in the Middle East.

"Oil prices might remain buoyed on supply concerns in the event of an escalation in the war," said Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities.

The windfall tax is typically relooked every two weeks. The tax, which is revised every fortnight, remains unchanged at zero for diesel, petrol, and aviation turbine fuel.

A tax levied on an unforeseen or unexpectedly large profit is called a windfall tax.

India started the windfall tax on crude oil producers and on exports of gasoline, diesel and the aviation fuel in July 2022, to regulate private refiners who wanted to sell fuel overseas instead of locally, to gain from firm refining margins. *—ANI*

TEXTILE SECTOR RECOVERS FROM PANDEMIC LOSSES

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The textile industry is seeing signs of recovery, with global retailers and brands reporting that their inventory levels have returned to pre-Covid standards, a recent report of Avendus Spark observed.

However, it highlights a cautious outlook on demand as garment companies await a boost in order book momentum. This cautious optimism suggests that the order cycle may remain shorter than usual for the foreseeable future."Garment companies are still awaiting a revival in order book momentum."

The report added that Indian cotton prices are currently lower than global prices, helping cotton spinners grow their volumes. However, EBITDA margins fell by 80 basis points, suggesting a possible slowdown in volume demand. Man-Made Staple Fibers (MMSF) saw a 5 per cent yoy revenue growth.

The cheaper imports from countries like China and Bangladesh led to pricing pressures. Capacity constraints limited volume growth opportunities for MMSF players. Several companies plan to increase capacity in the coming quarters, potentially driving growth.

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme is expected to encourage further investments. *—PTI*

India in talks with Africa, Latin America for mines

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

India is in talks with Africa as well as Latin America to get critical mineral blocks on a government-to-government basis, Veena Kumari Dermal, joint secretary of the Ministry of Mines, said on Tuesday.

Critical minerals such as lithium are essential components in many of today's rapidly growing clean energy technologies, including wind turbines, electricity networks, and electric vehicles.

"We are having lots of discussions with many other resources-rich countries both in Africa as well as in Latin America for getting... a block on a G2G basis or on a priority basis," Dermal said at India Energy Storage Week (IESW) 2024 organised by India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA).

The mines ministry, she said, is giving more and more importance to the exploration of critical minerals in India.

At the domestic front, the government has successfully auctioned one lithium block in Chhattisgarh, the joint secretary added.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

Meanwhile, the government cancelled the auction of 14 critical minerals that were on offer in the second round of auction.

In June, the government had put on sale 21 blocks in the fourth round of auction of critical and strategic minerals.

The government received 56 physical bids and 56 online bids for 18 of the 20 blocks offered during the first tranche of the auction, which began on November 29, 2023.

However, the auction for 13 of the 20 blocks was cancelled due to a lukewarm response.

Seven of these cancelled blocks were re-notified for auction in the third round. *—PTI*

RBI PROPOSES RULES ON EXPORT AND IMPORT

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The RBI on Tuesday proposed rationalising regulations that cover export and import transactions with an aim to promote ease of doing business and empower banks to provide more efficient service to their foreign exchange customers.

The central bank has issued 'Regulation of Foreign Trade under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 – Draft Regulations and Directions' in this regard.

As per the draft, every exporter should furnish to the specified authority a declaration specifying the amount representing the full export value of the goods or services.

The draft also proposes that an exporter who has not realised the full value of export within the time specified may be caution listed by the authorised dealer.

The RBI said the proposed regulations are intended to promote ease of doing business, especially for small exporters and importers. *—PTI*

India's coal production rises 14%

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The country's coal production rose by 14.49 per cent to 84.63 million tonne (MT) in June.

The country's coal output was 73.92 MT in June last fiscal, according to provisional figures of the government.

In June Coal India Ltd's (CIL) production was at 63.10 MT, registering a rise of 8.87 per cent compared to the same period last year, the coal ministry said in a statement.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

India's coal dispatch in June was at 85.76 MT, up by 10.15 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Additionally, as on June 30, the coal stock held by coal companies witnessed a surge, reaching 95.02 MT. "This surge reflects an impressive annual growth rate of 41.68 per cent underscoring the robust performance and efficiency of the coal sector.

Concurrently, the coal stock at thermal power plants (TPP) marked a notable increase to 46.70 MT (Provisional) on the same date, with an annual growth rate of 30.15 per cent," it added. *—PTI*

Groww pays ₹9L to SEBI, settles violation case

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Groww Asset Management Ltd (formerly known as Indiabulls Asset Management Company Ltd) and its trustee have settled with markets watchdog SEBI a case pertaining to alleged violation of regulatory norms after paying Rs 9 lakh.

This came after the applicants -- Groww Asset Management Company and Groww Trustee Ltd (earlier known as Indiabulls Trustee Company Ltd) -- proposed to settle the alleged violation by "neither admitting nor denying the findings of fact".

"It is hereby ordered that any proceedings that maybe initiated for the violations... are settled in respect of the applicants," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in its settlement order passed on June 28.

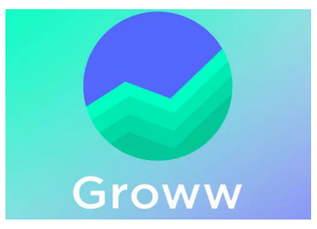


PHOTO: UNSPLASH

The applicants, in the settlement application, stated that during April 2020 to March 2022, certain scheme-related expenses were being paid by the AMC and were not paid from the schemes.

The SEBI's rule mandates that all scheme-related expenses, including commission paid to distributors, need to necessarily be paid from the scheme only within the regulatory limits and not from any other entity through any route. *—ANI*

DESPITE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Punjab still uses harmful paddy cultivation

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Farmers in Punjab's districts with the highest stubble-burning incidents continue to cultivate the long-duration and water-intensive paddy variety Pusa 44, according to a new survey released on Tuesday.

The survey, conducted by researchers from the Delhi-based independent think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), also found that nearly half of Punjab farmers using in-situ crop residue management (CRM) machines still burn some loose paddy straw to ensure the machines' efficient operation and for pest control.

The CEEW report highlighted that 36 per cent of the 1,478 farmers surveyed in 11 districts of Punjab grew Pusa 44 in Kharif 2022 due to its high yield.

Due to paddy variety Pusa 44's environmentally harmful characteristics, the state government de-notified it in October 2023 *PHOTO: PTI*

The selected districts -- Amritsar, Bathinda, Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka, Firozpur, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Patiala, Sangrur, and SBS Nagar -- accounted for about 58 per cent of the Kharif fires reported in Punjab in 2022.

High-and medium-burn districts, such as Sangrur and Ludhiana, have the highest proportion of Pusa 44 growers.

Although farmers prefer Pusa 44 for its higher yield, current agricultural subsidies for electricity and fertiliser lead them to overlook the crop's environmental impact, said Kurinji Kemanth, Programme Associate at CEEW.

Due to Pusa 44's environmentally harmful characteristics, the state government de-notified the variety in October 2023.

However, it remains in circulation primarily through private seed dealers, Kemanth added. The acreage of these short-duration varieties has drastically increased in Punjab over the last decade – from 32.6 per cent in 2012 to 69.8 per cent in 2021. *—PTI*

EURO 2024

Portugal survives shootout scare after Ronaldo misses penalty

Portuguese team booked their place in the Euro 2024 quarter-finals

DUSSELDORF, 2 JULY

Portugal's quest for Euro 2024 glory took a dramatic turn in their round-of-16 clash against Slovenia. Despite dominating possession, Portugal failed to find a breakthrough in normal time.

The Slovenian defence, marshaled superbly, frustrated the Portuguese attack, forcing the game into extra time.

The Portuguese team booked their place in the Euro 2024 quarter-finals, but not without a dramatic penalty shootout and a moment of heartbreak for their captain, Cristiano Ronaldo.

Ronaldo would make amends during the penalty shootout as he was the first one to take the spot-kick for Portugal as they won 3-0.

Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal looks dejected as he is consoled by teammate
PHOTO: X / EUFA.COM

Portugal boss Roberto Martinez has thanked Cristiano Ronaldo for caring for the group a lot after their Round of 16 clash against Slovenia.

Ronaldo had a whirlwind night as he missed a penalty in extra time during the intense game and broke down in tears.

Speaking after the win, as quoted by Reuters, Portugal boss Martinez said Ronaldo didn't need to care that much when it came to that miss and he was certain that he would be the first person to step up to take the penalty.

The Portugal boss said he felt proud of his captain and the dressing room was delighted with him.

"He (Ronaldo) doesn't need to care that much and that's why I thank him for being the way he is, for caring for the group I was certain he had to be the first penalty taker and show us the way to the victory," Martinez told reporters.

—PTI

More changes to Mbappé face mask

LONDON, 2 JULY

Mbappe has had more masks than goals at the European Championship. The France captain is struggling with his peripheral vision in the masks that were fitted to protect his broken nose from his country's opening game at Euro 2024.

Panama cruises past Bolivia

PANAMA, 2 JULY

Panama beats Bolivia 3-1 to reach knockout rounds
PHOTO: @COPAAMERICA

In a historic night at the Inter & Co Stadium, Panama announced their arrival on the next Copa América stage with a thrilling 3-1 victory over Bolivia, securing their maiden quarter-final berth dramatically.

From the kickoff, Panama seized control, knowing that only a win in Florida could bolster their chances of progressing at the expense of the tournament hosts, the United States. The breakthrough came in the 22nd minute when José Fajardo, riding high from his match-winning heroics against the USA, lashed a powerful half-volley into the net, leaving Bolivia's goalkeeper Guillermo Viscarra helpless.

Bolivia, desperate to keep their quarter-final dreams alive, pushed forward but struggled to break down Panama's resilient defense.

Their hopes were momentarily reignited in the 69th minute when substitute Bruno Miranda capitalized on a defensive lapse to equalize, seemingly crushing Panama's hopes.

However, fate took a decisive turn as news arrived that Uruguay had taken the lead against the United States, renewing Panama's lifeline.

Responding to the urgency, Panama's substitute Eduardo Guerrero etched his name into national football folklore by heading in a sublime goal, putting Panama back in front and igniting wild celebrations amongst players and fans alike.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Praggnanandhaa to take on Bogdan-Daniel

BUCHAREST, 2 JULY

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa will look to sharpen his game after squandering winning opportunities when he takes on last-placed Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in the sixth round of the Superbet Classic Chess tournament. While Praggnanandhaa has not been at his best in better positions, World Championship challenger D Gukesh has survived pretty well despite living dangerously in a couple of games in the tournament, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour. With five rounds gone and just four more to come, the two Indians with three points apiece, are within striking distance of the tournament leader Fabiano Caruana of the United States who is on 3.5 points.*—PTI*

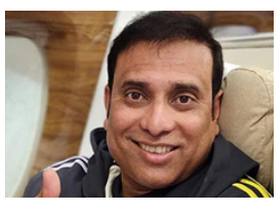


PHOTO: PTI

Laxman-coached India team leave for Zimbabwe

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

A young-Indian cricket team under National Cricket Academy head VVS Laxman left for Zimbabwe to play a five-match T20I series starting in Harare on 6 July. The team will be led by Shubman Gill while the likes of youngsters Riyan Parag and Abhishek Sharma have been rewarded for their exploits in the last IPL with maiden India call-ups. Skipper Gill, the reserve opener for the T20 World Cup was on a break and will link up with the Zimbabwe-bound squad directly in Harare from the US.*—PTI*

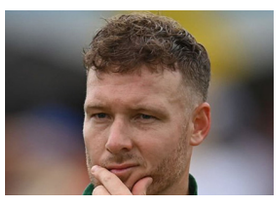


PHOTO: PTI

Gutted, tough pill to swallow: Miller on T20 WC final loss

JOHANNESBURG, 2 JULY

A "gutted" David Miller said the T20 World Cup final loss to India was a tough blow, but the swashbuckling batter expressed confidence that despite enduring pain the resilient South African team would continue pushing boundaries. Shedding the unwanted tag of perennial "chokers", the Proteas had marched into their maiden T20 World Cup final unbeaten. However, they faltered in the summit clash, losing to India by seven runs.*—PTI*

Dravid gives touching farewell speech; thanks Rohit

BRIDGETOWN, 2 JULY

Departing India coach Rahul Dravid has revealed how a call from Rohit Sharma made him stay on in his job after the loss to Australia in the ODI World Cup 2023 final. Dravid, who is now leaving the job, masterminded India to the T20 World Cup title on 29 June as they defeated South Africa by 7 runs in Barbados. Dravid went on to have his final dressing room speech with the team, where he had a special thanks reserved for his skipper.

While the spotlight often shines on stars like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Jasprit Bumrah for their stellar performances, Dravid's influence behind the scenes has been profound. His leadership faced challenges, particularly after India's heartbreaking loss in the ODI World Cup final the previous year. Speculations swirled about his future, given the intense scrutiny that comes with coaching a team as esteemed as India.

However, a pivotal moment came through a phone call from captain Rohit Sharma, urging Dravid to continue leading the team until the T20 World Cup in 2024. In an interview with Indian Express, Suryakumar Yadav shared insights into how Rohit Sharma and BCCI secretary Jay Shah convinced Dravid to stay on. This decision proved instrumental as it set the stage for India's victorious campaign, showcasing Dravid's strategic prowess and leadership.

—PTI

Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma *PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP*

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF LEGENDS

All eyes on Yuvraj, Afridi and Gayle

EDGBASTON, 2 JULY

The Inaugural season of the highly anticipated World Championship of Legends is beginning on the 3rd of July *PHOTO: X / @INDIA_ALLSPORTS*

Some of the cricket's top stars including Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Shahid Afridi, Kevin Pietersen, Younis Khan, and Chris Gayle will be returning to compete in the inaugural edition of the World Championship of Legends.

The tournament is scheduled to be held from July 3 to 13 at the Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham, England.

India, Pakistan, Australia, West Indies, South Africa, and England will be the six teams competing in the competition.

Each team will play against each other once, and the top four will then compete in the semi-final followed by the final.

India's first match will be against England on July 3, which is also the opening game of the tournament while the marquee India-Pakistan clash is scheduled for July 6.

The full squads and schedule are as below:

- The tournament is scheduled to be held from 3 to 13 July at the Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham, England

India Squad: Yuvraj Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, Robin Uthappa, Ambati Rayudu, Yusuf Pathan, Gurkeerat Mann, Rahul Sharma, Naman Ojha, Rahul Shukla, Rp Singh, Vinay Kumar, Dhawal Kulkarni, Anureet singh, Pawan Negi

Australia Squad: Brett Lee, Tim Paine, Shaun Marsh, Ben Cutting, Ben Dunk, Dirk Nannes, Dan Christian, Ben Laughlin, Aaron Finch, John Hasting, Brad Haddin, Callum Ferguson, Peter Siddle, Xavier Doherty, Nathan Coulter-Nile

South Africa squad: Jacques Kallis, Imran Tahir, Herschelle Gibbs, Makhaya Ntini, Dale Steyn, Ashwell Prince, Neil Mckenzie, Ryan Mclaren, Justin Ontong, Rory Kliendflet, JP Duminy, Richard Levi, Dane Vilas, Vernon Philander, Charl Langeveldt

West Indies squad: Chris Gayle, Darren Sammy, Samuel Badree, Tino Best, Rayad Ryan Emrit, Jason Mohammed, Navin Stewart, Ashley Nurse, Dwayne Smith, Sulieman Benn, Chadwick Walton, Jerome Taylor, Fidel Edwards, Kirk Edwards, Jonathan Carter

Pakistan squad: Sharjeel Khan, Umer Akmal, Younis Khan, Shoaib Malik, Misbah Ul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razzaq, Wahab Riaz, Sohail Tanveer, Sohail Khan, Abdul Rehman, Aamir Yamin, Taufeeq Umer, Shoaib Maqsood, Yasir Arafat, Tanveer Ahmed

England squad: Kevin Pietersen, Ravi Bopara, Ian Bell, Samit Patel, Owais Shah, Mustard Philip, Sajid Mahmood, Chris Schofield, Ajmal Shahzad, Ryan Sidebottom, Usman Afzal, Stuart Meaker, Kevin O'Brien, Darren Maddy.

—PTI

Tottenham sign Archie Gray on 6-year contract

LONDON, 2 JULY

Tottenham Hotspur has announced the signing of Archie Gray from Leeds United. The versatile midfielder has signed a contract that will run until 2030 and will wear the number 14 shirt.

Born in Durham, Archie joined Leeds at Under-9 level and after progressing well through their Academy system, picked up his first involvement with their first team in 2021 at the age of just 15, when he was part of their matchday squad in the Premier League.

After winning promotion with Leeds' Under-21s at the end of the 2022/23 season, he made his senior competitive debut on the opening day of the 2023/24 EFL Championship campaign and starred throughout last term in central midfield and at right-back, making 52 appearances in all competitions.

—PTI

Gray *PHOTO: X / @ARCHIE.GRAY06*

Nagal loses to Serbia's Miomir

DUBAI, 2 JULY

Sumit Nagal exited from Wimbledon in the first round after a hard-fought four-set loss against Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic on Tuesday.

The match lasted two hours and 38 minutes, ending with scores of 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 4-6 in favor of Kecmanovic. Nagal's debut in the men's singles main draw saw him struggle on the grass court, committing 44 unforced errors. Despite the errors, he managed to hit 47 winners and took a set off the world number 53. Nagal ranked 72, but ultimately could only accumulate 104 points compared to Kecmanovic's 122.

Kecmanovic smashed six aces and conceded only two double faults. This victory marks his second win over Nagal, following a previous victory at the ATP 250 event in Cologne, Germany, five years ago, PTI reported. Nagal's participation marked the first time in five years that an Indian played in a Wimbledon men's singles main draw match. The previous participant, Prajnesh Gunneswaran, also made a first-round exit in 2019. Nagal is set to represent India in the upcoming Paris Olympics.

—PTI

Sumit Nagal exited from Wimbledon in the first round *PHOTO: X / @NAGALSUMIT*

Patil urges BCCI to support Gaekwad

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Former India cricketer Sandeep Patil has commended the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for announcing a prize money of 125 crore for the victorious Indian cricket team led by Rohit Sharma after their triumphant 2024 T20 World Cup campaign.

Patil, however, has called on the BCCI to extend similar financial support to former cricketer and coach Anshuman Gaekwad, who is battling blood cancer.

In a column for Mid-Day, Patil revealed that Gaekwad, 71, has been undergoing treatment for the past year at King's College Hospital in London. During a visit to the hospital, Gaekwad confided in Patil about his urgent need for funds to continue his treatment.

Anshuman Gaekwad, who is battling blood cancer *PHOTO: PTI*

"Anshu told me that he needs funds for his treatment. Soon, Dilip Vengsarkar and I spoke to BCCI treasurer Ashish Shelar. Our calls were made to Ashish Shelar after seeing Anshu at King's College Hospital in London.

Ashish Shelar instantly said he would look into our and other former cricketers' requests for funds," Patil wrote. "I'm sure he will facilitate this and, at the risk of sounding macabre, save Anshu's life.

—PTI

WIMBLEDON 2024

Osaka wins for first time in 6 years

WIMBLEDON, 2 JULY

Naomi Osaka had not won a match at Wimbledon in six years. Hadn't even played there in five. Grass courts never were her favorite surface.

Twelve months ago at this time, Osaka was off the tour while becoming a mother her daughter, Shai, turns 1 on Tuesday and recalls flipping on the TV in the hospital and seeing a certain Grand Slam event on the screen.

"I'm just really excited to be here," Osaka said Monday after pulling out a 6-1, 1-6, 6-4 victory over Diane Parry in the first round at the All England Club by taking the last two games from 4-all in the third set. "It's funny because Wimbledon was the first tournament I watched after pregnancy."

Other big names who won on Day 1 at Wimbledon included reigning U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, 2021 U.S. Open winner Emma Raducanu, and three-time major champion Carlos Alcaraz, all on Centre Court. Alcaraz began his title defense feeling a bit jittery, he said afterward but came through with a 7-6 (3), 7-5, 6-2 victory over Estonian qualifier Mark Lajal.

"I still get nerves when I am playing here," said Alcaraz, who won the French Open last month to become, at 21, the youngest man with a major trophy on three surfaces. "I practiced 45 minutes on Thursday, and it's the first time that I was nervous in a practice just because I'm playing here." Lajal (pronounced la-YAHL), who's a week younger, was making his Grand Slam debut and felt it to his core, too.

—PTI

Naomi Osaka and Coco Gauff *PHOTO: @WIMBLEDON*

Murray to play only doubles

LONDON, 2 JULY

Two-time Wimbledon champion Andy Murray will play only doubles at his last appearance at the All England Club following his withdrawal from singles on Tuesday, just over a week after back surgery. The 37-year-old Murray pulled out of the singles competition hours before he was supposed to play Tomas Machac on Centre Court. "Unfortunately, despite working incredibly hard on his recovery since his operation just over a week ago.

—PTI

Jamshedpur and Shillong to be new venues for Durand Cup

KOLKATA, 2 JULY

The domestic season opener Durand Cup football tournament will be held from July 27 to August 31 across four venues with Indian Super League, I-League, and other invitational teams competing in it.

The 133rd edition of Asia's oldest tournament will have 43 matches to be played in a round-robin league-cum-knockout format, with the opening match and the final scheduled at the iconic Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) in Kolkata.

The 24 participating teams will be divided into six groups. Eight teams -- group toppers and two best second-placed sides -- will qualify for the knockout stage.

Like last year, international teams are expected to participate this year too, the organizers said on Tuesday.

Continuing with its commitment to spread the tournament further into the East and North-East, two new cities -- Jamshedpur and Shillong have been added as host venues this year.

Matches will be held in Kokrajhar in Assam for the second consecutive year, besides Kolkata, which has been a host for the last five years. Kolkata will host three groups while Kokrajhar, Shillong, and Jamshedpur will host one group each.

ISL side Mohun Bagan Super Giant are the defending champions, having won the tournament for a record 17th time, the most by any team.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI